

Old Becoming New: Little Known “Gems” of the String Orchestra Repertoire

SANDRA DACKOW, CLINICIAN

Looking for “new” and exciting compositions for your string orchestra?

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BÉLA BARTÓK

(1881-1945)

DANCES OF TRANSYLVANIA

#01913 · GRADE IV+

Those familiar with the Willner arrangement of Bartók's *Rumanian Folk Dances* know what pleasure his version for string orchestra brings both listeners and players. The *Dances of Transylvania* are considerably easier, both technically and rhythmically, and offer a Grade 4 window into the mind of an extraordinary composer. Like the *Rumanian Folk Dances*, these *Dances of Transylvania* exist in multiple versions, including full orchestra.

The three short movements depict *Bagpipes* (Movement I), a *Bear Dance* (Movement II), and a *Final Dance* (Movement III). Phrases can be unusual shapes and there are some changing meters, but all makes sense according to Bartók's logic. The syncopation is easy to feel and parts rarely leave the staff. These dances used to be found frequently on school orchestra programs; it is hoped that there will be a renewal of interest in these delightful pieces.

LEARN MORE ABOUT BARTÓK



Béla Bartók, like his Hungarian colleague Zoltán Kodály, and his English counterparts Holst, Vaughan Williams and Grainger, spent considerable time in the country searching for authentic folk music, much of which he later employed in significant compositions. Folk music has been featured in serious compositions by many composers, often sentimentalized or kept deliberately simple. Bartók, like Grainger, goes for the real deal, with all its rough edges, creating music from out of the way places that has developed its own unique harmonic and metrical idiosyncrasies.

BÉLA BARTÓK

(1881-1945)

TEN PIECES FOR CHILDREN #10371 › GRADE II

Bartók is one of the few composers to truly understand how to write art music for less experienced players or new listeners. His gift of *Microcosmos* for piano students takes beginners through the most basic steps of technique and into a world of short, sophisticated pieces at which we continue to marvel for their depth, as well as their ease.

In *Ten Pieces for Children*, Bartók presents technically easy, musically complete short works. This arrangement for strings by colleague Leo Weiner is from the original *Gyermeknek*, a four volume series of 85 piano pieces for children based upon Hungarian and Slovakian folk songs. These can be performed as a quartet (the bass part is ad. libitum), quintet or string orchestra. While musical demands can be sophisticated (passion, melancholy, canonic writing, non-mainstream harmonies) and some of the bowings require fast dynamic changes, and flourishes off the string, the left hand technical demands remain modest. Since the pieces are so short, no difficulty continues for long. Technically these works could be considered a strong Grade II. Seldom are we given the gift of technically easy music of substance from such a great and provocative composer.

LEARN MORE ABOUT BARTÓK



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GIOVANNI BOLZONI

(1841-1919)

MINUET FOR STRING ORCHESTRA #07287 · GRADE IV (MODERATELY DIFFICULT)

Violinist and composer Giovanni Bolzoni, from Parma, Italy, is best remembered today for this lovely *Minuet*. Old-fashioned, precious, nostalgic, and at the same time romantic, this work immediately charms all who hear it. A perfect encore, it was performed by Toscanini and Arthur Fiedler among others (Frederick Fennell, celebrated wind ensemble conductor, recorded this minuet with the London Pops Orchestra).

Romantic from the very first measure, the music sighs, protests, yearns and melts while leaning on non-harmonic tones, which offers momentary bittersweet dissonances. At times coquettish, at others voluptuous, it is elegant from beginning to end. The trio quotes Boccherini's famous *Minuet* and a lovely pizzicato coda brings the work to a perfect ending.

Yes, the work is in B Major - players will need to shift around to group the A-sharps and the bonus double sharps which make the music so poignant. The key and unfamiliar accidentals with the less familiar hand patterns they require, present the technical challenges of this piece. A great reason to review the B Major, F-sharp Major, c-sharp minor, E Major and other related scales. Nothing is out of reach if students pump iron regularly with all their scales. Players can deal with it – everything is easy to hear and the tempo is marked “*comodo*” for convenience.

LEARN MORE ABOUT BOLZONI



Upon graduating from the Parma Conservatory, Bolzoni held many posts as both violinist and orchestra conductor with several different organizations, including Teatro Comunale di Reggio Emilia, Comunale di Cremona, Istituto Morlacchi, and Teatro Regio de Parma. As the director of the conservatory of music in Turin, one of his pupils was future composer Edgard Varese. Aside from his *Minuet*, Bolzoni composed three operas and several other small ensemble works.

FRANK BRIDGE

(1879-1941)

SUITE FOR STRINGS

#01560 · GRADE V+ OR PLAYABLE VI (ADVANCED)

Those familiar with Britten's *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge* will attest to the striking, unprepared modulation within the first few bars of Bridge's theme. The same device can be found on many occasions in Bridge's *Suite for String Orchestra*. Dramatic harmonic pivots, pre-Britten arpeggios, plenty of chromaticism and technically challenging writing are found, grounded in a very traditional folksy-modal "English" flavor.

Suite for Strings, in four movements, opens with a modal, wistful *Prelude*, in 9/8 time, undulating in and out of different keys. The music is voluptuous and romantic, leading the listener through changing landscapes and emotions. The movement offers opportunities for the orchestra to sing with a wide-open full sound. There are also typically English gestures of protestation.

The *Intermezzo* functions as a light-hearted scherzo, a contrast to the serious, searching opening movement. Bridge's rapidly shifting modulations are also at play here. The music is quick, engaging and endearing, tonally centered despite the shifts in key.

The third movement, *Nocturne*, is searching and romantic, drifting in and out of key areas, rarely locked in place for more than a bar or two. It is, nonetheless, absolutely, achingly beautiful, taken on its own terms. The key changes will take your breath away.

Finally, the *Finale*, an energetic allegro vivo, gives us the Britten/Bridge arpeggios in the third bar and we are off on a romp, which could only be played by strings. The music pivots in and out of keys in both small and shockingly major ways. Another romantic and wistful theme provides contrast and conjures up Vaughan Williams and Parry, before finishing in the playful spirit of Britten's *Simple Symphony*.

Frank Bridge's *Suite for String Orchestra* is not well known outside of England and it deserves to be explored by student and professional orchestras here in the US. Though technically and musically challenging, it is playable and will yield rich rewards to those who explore it. The writing involves solos for several instruments, a variety of meters (all standard), shifts in and out of key areas, chromatic writing and use of higher positions, but nothing which would prove insurmountable for an advanced student ensemble.

LEARN MORE ABOUT BRIDGE



When we engage with the music of twentieth century composer Benjamin Britten, we also are connected to his teacher, Frank Bridge; one can hear in the music of Britten echoes of the style and gestures of Bridge. Britten went on to write what is probably the most challenging tour de force of the string orchestra literature, *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge*, a tribute of almost unimaginable scale and invention, not to mention difficulty. Even the celebrated *Simple Symphony* owes a debt to Frank Bridge. From wistful evocations of the English countryside to the cartwheeling arpeggios so associated with the music of Benjamin Britten, the influence of Frank Bridge is never far away.

OLE BULL

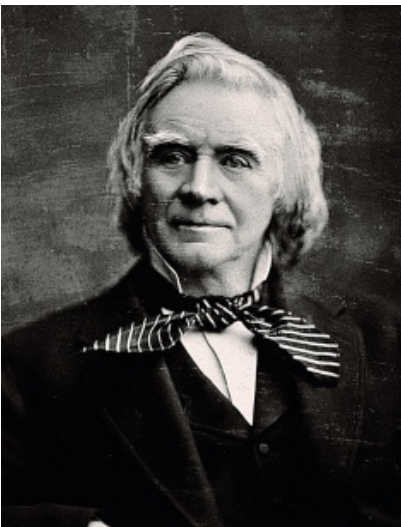
(1810-1880)

SOLITUDE SUR LA MONTANGE

#07158 › GRADE IV (INTERMEDIATE OR EASY ADVANCED)

Solitude sur la Montagne is a short work harmonized by the Norwegian composer Johan Svendsen and arranged for strings by A. Reinhard, which reminds the listener of the simple and sentimental works of his countryman Edvard Grieg. Imagine an evening by the fireside sharing with family in an isolated mountain location. The tempo is slow and there is position work, but nothing difficult. The real challenges are musical, telling the story in this beautiful miniature.

LEARN MORE ABOUT BULL



Norway's most celebrated musical figure after Edvard Grieg, the composer and violinist Ole Bull, lived a remarkable life. Born in Bergen, he had a long career as a touring concert violinist, and also composed, mostly for violin. Bull traveled the world, including visits to the US where he lived in several places and even began a "New Norway" utopian colony in what is now Ole Bull State Park in northern Pennsylvania. His best-known residence was a beautiful home on the island of Lysoen near Bergen, a site visited by many tourists today. There are monuments and reminders of his visits and concerts in a wide variety of places worldwide.

WILLIAM BYRD

(1543-1623)

THE CARMAN'S WHISTLE #09873 · GRADE IV

The Carman's Whistle is one of the best known original Renaissance works for what was evolving into the modern string orchestra. Based upon an Elizabethan tune, this melody probably derived from the whistle or song of a Carman; men who drove carts in the streets of early England that were historically famous for their musical abilities. The music becomes increasingly elaborate as it progresses through its series of variations. Bantcock's arrangement is actually quite romantic, with its character changes and fluctuating tempi. Technically the work is not difficult, but because of the significant groupings of six note figures, a few in double time, the work is classed as an easy Grade IV.

LEARN MORE ABOUT BYRD

Famed English composer, William Byrd was a direct influence over English music and a great master of the late Renaissance era. A true craftsman of his time, Byrd cultivated many of the era's musical styles including, different forms of sacred/secular polyphony, English anthems, and keyboard and consort music for the Anglican Church. He studied music at an early age, probably from Thomas Tallis, then the leading composer of the Chapel Royal Choir. Succeeding in his musical education, he was appointed organist of the Lincoln Cathedral in 1563. Ten years later, despite his Roman Catholic heritage, he moved to London for employment at the Royal Chapel (of Protestant faith), a position he held for the rest of his life.

Working in a religious setting, it comes as no surprise that many of Byrd's compositions are of the sacred persuasion. However, it is surprising that his output of Anglican Church music is unexpectedly small considering his employment at the Royal Chapel. Queen Elizabeth was a moderate Protestant and music lover which allowed Byrd to compose his preferred Latin sacred works. His best compositions are considered to be his Latin masses and motets; some consider his masses the finest written by an



English composer. Opportunity for public performance of this music did not exist due to the religious views of England at that time, so they were often performed at private residences or at secret catholic religious services bringing them to favor.

Despite his preference to Latin sacred works, Byrd's loyalty to the Crown was never challenged. In 1575, the Queen granted Byrd and Tallis the rights to a printing monopoly where they published music and ruled music paper. This significant position placed Byrd amongst the founders of the English print industry, a position which he held for many years after the death of Tallis. His involvement in publishing allowed him to print over 450 of his compositions, leaving a considerable legacy of his music at a time when many important musical forms were emerging.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD CHADWICK

(1854-1931)

SERENADE IN F FOR STRING ORCHESTRA

#13246 › GRADE V

Chadwick's *Serenade in F for Strings* first appeared in 1890 as a charming four-movement work for strings. Inspired by popular, folk and hymn elements from American music culture, this piece offers a refreshing alternative solution in programming patriotic or American performance literature.

Comparisons will be made with the Dvořák *Serenade*, in both style and technical scope. The first movement, while difficult, is also exuberant and expansive. The motives are bold and heroic, the movement works through to an exciting conclusion. Again, Dvořák comes to mind in the folk-like Andantino. Celli are divided, sometimes into four parts, for a rich texture. Ditto for the third movement, a retro minuetto with a faster, major key trio, again, reminiscent of Dvořák. The *Finale* is a 6/8 romp which swings through many key areas – swing is the operative descriptor, as syncopations rock this material. There are metrical challenges as the music alternates sections of triple with duple time. The work builds to a thrilling climax. The Chadwick *Serenade* is a serious work for advanced orchestras, a solid and demanding Grade V.

LEARN MORE ABOUT CHADWICK

George Whitefield Chadwick is often dubbed as the dean of early American composers. As an educator and principal composer of the New England Conservatory and founding member of the Music Teachers National Association, Chadwick taught several generations of American musicians and came to be regarded as the standard bearer of the American academic tradition in music.

Born in rural Massachusetts, Chadwick lost his mother in his first week of life. Although his father was a musician, he received musical instruction from his brother as a youth with no additional musical encouragement from his remaining family. In 1871, he dropped out of high school to devote more time for musical studies and worked at his father's insurance firm to support himself financially. Five years later, Chadwick accepted a one year position at Olivet College and later traveled to Germany determined to diversify his music education. In 1882, he joined the organ faculty of the New England Conservatory where he was later appointed as head director. Under Chadwick's direction, the conservatory modernized its curriculum and transformed from its former role as a piano teacher training school to a full fledged conservatory on the European model.



An avid composer, Chadwick produced five operas, three symphonies, five string quartets, a variety of chamber works and his most famous works, *Four Symphonic Sketches* and the *Tam O'Shanter Overture*. His works portray a distinctly unique patriotic style, influenced by characterizations of down-to-earth depictions of real people's lives. Paving the way for future American contemporaries such as Charles Ives, Chadwick is regarded among those responsible for the first significant body of concert music by composers from the United States.

NORMAN DELLO JOIO

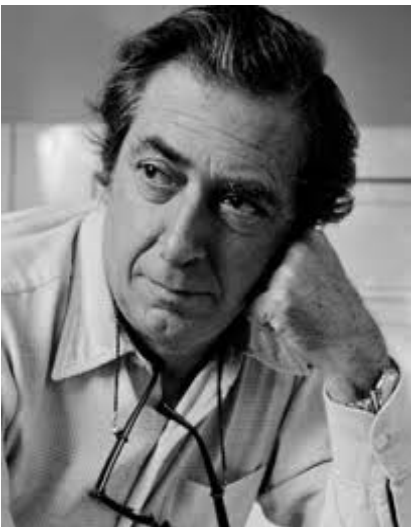
(1913-2008)

AIR FOR STRINGS

#10609 › INTERMEDIATE

Air for Strings is a straight forward, short, and very approachable work for string orchestra. Divisi and position work is minimal, and chromaticism is technically accessible at a comfortable tempo. There is a popular waltz flavor to the work, which opens in one key and concludes in another. Little is available for intermediate string orchestra by a composer of such stature, and this lilting piece makes for a very effective contrast when programming.

LEARN MORE ABOUT DELLO JOIO



American composer Norman Dello Joio was born in New York to Italian immigrant parents. While growing up, he served as a church organist and later attended the Julliard School. His most significant composition teacher was Paul Hindemith, who was directly responsible for his following of a tonal path rather than one of the more dissonant schools of the time. Throughout his extensive career, Dello Joio contributed pieces in a wide variety of genres including works for chorus, orchestra, concert band, chamber music, and television productions.

JOHANN FREIDRICH FASCH

(1688-1758)

SYMPHONY IN A #11903 · III-IV

Fasch could be described as a transitional late Baroque composer, bringing us concerti and symphonies which are straightforward and immediately engaging, pointing towards the new Classical style. This delightful and very approachable *Symphony in A* is similar to much of Vivaldi's works in structure and substance. The opening *Allegro* is at once bright and catchy, without being difficult. In the *Andante*, one will, again, recognize an approach similar to Vivaldi. The final movement is a 12/8 *Gigue*, featuring the all the violins in what amounts to a seventeenth century County Fiddling Fest. While the violins are all heroes in this movement, the music is not difficult. This work could be classed as an easy Grade IV or a solid Grade III and makes a great contribution to the libraries of those groups transitioning from arrangements to standard literature.

LEARN MORE ABOUT FASCH

Born in 1688 in Buttelstedt, Germany, Johann Freidrich Fasch was one of Germany's leading composers in the first half of the 18th century. A contemporary of J.S. Bach and Georg Frideric Handel, his music included unusual and progressive scorings which provided an important link between the baroque and classical periods; some works anticipating the future idioms of Gluck, Haydn and Mozart.

Fasch received his formal music training under Johann Kuhnau at the famous St. Thomas School in Leipzig, a city which he later founded a Collegium Musicum at a local university. In 1722, he became Kapellmeister at the court of Zerbst where he received widespread fame after writing twelve cycles of church cantatas



and other sacred and festival works. It was the recognition from this appointment that brought an invitation to compete against J.S. Bach for the post of Kantor at the Thomasschule in Leipzig, but he refused to do so. Holding his music in high esteem, J.S. Bach copied out of five of Fasch's orchestral suites proving his appreciation of his masterworks.

Fasch was a true innovator of his time, favoring a form of thematic development which inspired future Romantic compositions. This progressive way of thinking began to break down the popular form of fugal style. Most well known for his overtures, symphonies, concertos and chamber music, he also created 14 masses, credos, psalms, serenades, operas, passions and over 100 church cantatas. Unfortunately, much of his music was lost as none of his creations were printed during his lifetime. Fasch died in Zerbst, Germany at the age of 70.

ARTHUR FOOTE

(1853-1937)

IRISH FOLK SONG #08470 · GRADE IV

Foote's *Irish Folk Song* is less well known, and does not employ the dense, sometimes murky harmonic language of his *Serenade for Strings*. This is a straightforward work, though it employs Schubertian shifts back and forth between major and minor. Cited at the top of the score is a poem by Gilbert Parker, presumably the Canadian, extraordinarily well-traveled writer, whose poems had also been set as songs by Edward Elgar:

You'll wander far and wide, dear, but you'll come back again,
You'll come back to your father and your mother in the glen,
Although we may be lyin' 'neath the heather grasses then
You'll be comin' back, my darlin'!

You'll hear the wild birds singin' beneath a brighter sky;
The roof-tree of your house, dear, it will be broad and high;
But you'll hunger for the hearth-stone, where, a child, you used to lie
You'll be comin' back, my darlin'!

What a lovely point of departure for an instrumental piece! Wistful, sentimental, but not cloying, this work would make all of us nostalgic for the hearth we left behind long ago. The first and second violins, as well as the violas have melodic contributions and there is a high, but not particularly difficult line for solo violin in the final refrain. This overlooked gem is a playable Grade 4.

LEARN MORE ABOUT FOOTE



American composer Arthur Foote is a contemporary of Gabriel Pierné who also bridged centuries and style periods. A New Englander, he was member of the Boston Six, a group of like-minded musicians who were exploring and advancing an “American” (as opposed to German or European) compositional style. Foote was the first significant serious American composer to be trained entirely in America; most of his colleagues had spent formative time in Germany. His *Suite for Strings in E Major* is programmed with frequent regularity.

ARTHUR FOOTE

(1853-1937)

SERENADE IN E FOR STRING ORCHESTRA, OP. 25 #11105 · GRADE V (ADVANCED, BUT APPROACHABLE)

Foote's *Serenade in E Major* for String Orchestra sounds European and romantic – one would not pick the style out of a lineup as being specifically American. The *Serenade*, not an especially long work, is in five short movements, with old-fashioned titles (an American *Holberg Suite*?). The opening *Praeludium* is charming, with a contrasting trio rather than much development, in keeping with the construction of short forms. Even the tempo indication of *Allegro comodo* says it all. The movement is in four sharps but is easy to hear and though there is chromaticism, the passagework is not high for any section.

The second movement entitled *Air* immediately brings to mind an American *Air for the G String* in both its construction, pace and mood. The second half is longer than Bach's, but we are glad, as it is exquisitely beautiful, and begins to remind us, again, of Grieg's *Holberg Suite*. There is high passagework for the first violin, some treble clef positionwork for violas and some shifting for the cellos. The pace is relaxed and the shifts well considered and under the hand.

The third movement, entitled *Intermezzo*, is once again, written to evoke an older style, with more modern harmonic language. A pizzicato section is especially charming. A trio with triplet passagework is romantic, but the accompaniment is technically demanding. The key signature of five sharps will challenge players, but the music is easy to hear. (How many students have encountered g-sharp minor, even briefly?) The music is entirely worth the sharps and double sharps.

The fourth movement, entitled *Romanze*, lives up to its name and we are surrounded by lush textures and romantic harmonies from the moment we start. Though there is challenging passagework and some pretty unexpected harmonic detours, the music is entirely worth this beautiful exploration. Past the mid-point, the music becomes impassioned, and again, the harmonies shift quickly and with surprises. The retransition is amazing, with a beautiful cello solo, leading us back to gentle recap of the opening romantic material. What a great soundtrack for a film scene of a nineteenth century marriage proposal (or...even better, a rejected proposal). There is passagework, grown up emotions and some high positions, but the pace is slow and the music still approachable.

In keeping with the entire nostalgic plan of the serenade, the finale is a *Gavotte*, first in a minor key, then shifting to major, making us feel the sun has just emerged from behind a cloud in the trio.

There is so much beautiful music in the *Serenade*, which deserves to be studied and performed. The movements are not long, but just the right length to be substantial and balanced.

LEARN MORE ABOUT FOOTE



Arthur Foote was the first significant American classical composer to be trained entirely in the US. American composers of previous generations had generally studied in Germany, but Foote attended Harvard and was included in the "Boston Six" along with George Whitefield Chadwick, Amy Beach, Edward MacDowell, John Knowles Paine, and Horatio Parker. These composers comprise the beginnings of a truly American tradition of composition and paved the way for even more distinctively American voices to come a generation later. Foote was a founder of the American Guild of Organists, and, as had several of his colleagues, gave us pedagogical writings on performance and theory.

ARTHUR FOOTE

(1853-1937)

SUITE FOR STRINGS IN E, OP. 63 #09808 › GRADE V (CHALLENGING)

This three movement work includes a charming *Praeludium*, a dense and whimsical *Pizzicato und Adagietto* with Romantic ambiguity, and an academic fugue (*Fuge*). Some of the writing is straightforward harmonically, while at other times it can feel as though we are “in murky waters” to quote a conductor who was threading his way through.

Praeludium - The opening of the work is so cozy and warm, we are invited to come in by the fire and trade our shoes for slippers right away. A second theme is more angular and the writing can be high. Try keeping track of all the modulations, which are swift and pungent. The recap brings us back to the comfy opening material and again, all is well.

Pizzicato und Adagietto - Think of this as a “not so simple symphony”. Though the 6/8 meter and general flavor are similar, this is much more challenging. The trio (*Adagietto*) involves some very ambiguous harmonic language, but achingly tender and beautiful music, as well. Conceptually this section is probably the most challenging part of the suite, though the tempo is slow. The pizz returns (just in time!) and we are off to a merry finish for the movement.

Fuge - Foote was probably always aware of the rigorous training his American predecessors received in Germany, where writing fugues was a rite of passage. The fugue, which finishes this suite, owes no apologies to any tradition, sounding as “learned” as those of the previous generation of American composers who studied abroad or those of European composers for that matter. Performing the *Fuge* requires great rhythmic control, including off the string bowing to keep the subdivision accurate and clean. Performing this movement will both require and impart discipline.

First violin parts reach for a high B, second violin parts do require position work, violas will use some treble clef and cellos, again up to a high B. Bass parts usually do not exceed fifth position F, with the exception of a G now and again. Other than for first violins, the real technical demands involve chromatic writing and fast shifting of key centers. The piece demands a certain level of maturity of musical thinking, as well as technical facility getting from one key area to another quickly. The pizzicato movement requires rapid and sure technique to deal with the rhythms as well as the tempo; index fingers will be toughened after this. The writing in the *Fuge* is sometimes high, which, coupled with the counterpoint and harmonic surprises can make for a good day's work.

LEARN MORE ABOUT FOOTE



The American composer Arthur Foote, bridged centuries and style periods. A New Englander, he was a member of the Boston Six, a group of like-minded musicians who were exploring and advancing an “American” (as opposed to German or European) compositional style. Foote was the first significant serious American composer to be trained entirely in America; most of his colleagues had spent formative time in Germany. His *Suite for Strings in E Major* is programmed with some regularity.

ROBERT FUCHS

(1847-1927)

SERENADE NO. 1 IN D FOR STRING ORCHESTRA #13596 · GRADE VI (ADVANCED)

The design and layout of the five movement *Serenade* follows Dvořák's *Serenade* almost exactly; some of the same Czech flavors can be found, as well as more mainstream German writing. The opening *Andante* is charming and immediately calls to mind the Dvořák in several places. Unlike the Dvořák, the movement is not extended and the development is limited. The climate is gracious and serene. The second movement, *Minuet*, is very Czech in flavor, and similar in a number of gestures to Dvořák's *Serenade*.

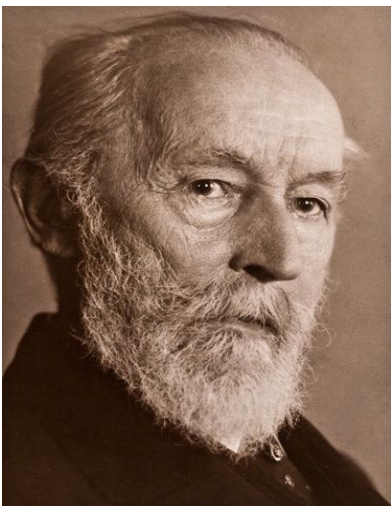
It is in the *Allegro Scherzando* that some of the most remarkable writing and mood/texture contrasts can be found. The movement is launched with fast passages, a rustic swirling peasant dance, yet gracious and refined at the same time (how does he do this??). Watch out for lurching modulations, which add to the fun. The trio could not be more of a contrast in mood (contemplative), texture (rich and thick, where the opening is open, high and light), and harmonic language (sentimental and chromatic). The retransition to the *Da Capo* is clever and smooth. In many ways, this middle movement is the true center of gravity for the *Serenade*. It is also the most rewarding movement for students to perform.

The *Adagio con molto espressione* provides great contrast, again in the same manner as the corresponding fourth movement in Dvořák's *Serenade*. The language is sentimental, romantic, and mainstream German. As in his first movement, the development is not elaborate, contrasting with the more intricate Dvořák plan. The music unfolds with richness and an almost comforting lack of tension.

Fasten your seatbelts for this truly wild *Finale*! A technical tour-de-force, the *Finale* begins ambiguously in d minor, imposing many trills and mordents (beloved by Dvořák!) on already busy and brisk music. The musical and technical challenges are considerable, requiring economical bowings at the frog, with left hands compressing notes and mordents into split seconds. Getting off tied-over sixteenth notes will be a rhythmic, as well as technical, challenge. The development is exciting with fast shifting tonalities and music landing in lots of unexpected places. The second theme is charming and brings smiles. Fuchs manages to dovetail his themes together in ways that shock at first, then leave the listener impressed with the clever solution and slickness with which this is managed (Brahms must have responded to these moments with admiration). The writing and construction is astonishing at times.

The technical and musical demands of the Fuchs *Serenade No. 1 in D* require an advanced and sophisticated performing group. Part of the challenge stems from the occasional wide spacing between voices, the same challenge element found in the Rossini string sonatas. If a group has successfully performed the Dvořák *Serenade*, however, the Fuchs can take such a group to the next level. The movements, for the most part, are not as long as the corresponding movements in the Dvořák, a consideration which can balance the difficulty factor.

LEARN MORE ABOUT FUCHS



The youngest of 13 children, Robert Fuchs was born in Austria (a country which, at the time, encompassed many ethnicities and cultures). Though he wrote several symphonies, church works, and two operas, he is best known for his chamber works and five serenades, three of which are written for string orchestra. Fuchs was admired by Brahms (no small endorsement!) and his serenades were popular enough during his lifetime for him to have been given the nickname "Serenaden-Fuchs".

CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD VON GLUCK

(1714-1787)

OVERTURE IN D FOR STRINGS #05288 · GRADE III (INTERMEDIATE)

In Gluck's *Overture in D for Strings*, the opening gives us a combination of a baroque style in the first violins, a classical style in the second violins, and a transition of baroque to classical in the bass part. Compare this with similar works of Mozart, for instance the *Three Divertimenti* K. 136, 137, 138. The first movement of Gluck's overture is a robust *Allegro*. There are many examples, like in the Brandenburg Concerto No. 5, where the first and second violins play one part throughout many segments of the movement against a bass line (again baroque).

In the *Andante*, the first and second violins continue to be in unison throughout, while the bass line (often in unison with the violas) progresses again in a very baroque manner. There are some florid backward dotted rhythms, as well as triplets, but the slow tempo can accommodate this.

It is in the last movement, *Presto*, that we get a glimpse of the breakthroughs to truly classical musical language. It is short, bright, and could be mistaken for Haydn or early Mozart. This delightful movement is uncomplicated and loads of fun to play, especially for the violins who really get to wail.

Gluck is often overlooked, as many of his works are transitioning from the baroque to classical style, and, used as we are to Haydn and Mozart, we can find this "in between" language a bit unsettling. This piece is straightforward, and good music for intermediate strings, as it does not exceed the technique for Grade III players. The violin parts go into third position, the viola and cello parts can be played entirely in first position, and the bass goes up to D in third position. Of course, other shifting can be employed, but as shifting is not necessary, it makes the work approachable for late middle school to early high school ensembles.

LEARN MORE ABOUT GLUCK



Christoph Willibald von Gluck bridged the Baroque and Classical periods, which gives us unique insights into the music of that era. Most of the time, we hear elements of the newer classical style, but he does revert back to baroque gestures. In this way, he is different from his contemporary, Mozart. Gluck, having been born two generations before Mozart, is celebrated as a reformer in the writing of opera of his day and made it a point to stress the importance of the music over the virtuosic expressions of florid singing.

CHRISTOPHER WILLIBALD VON GLUCK

(1714-1787)

SYMPHONY IN G MAJOR #05289 › GRADE III+ (UPPER INTERMEDIATE)

The *Symphony in G Major* for strings is a three-movement work (*Allegro - Andante - Presto*), an example of the Italian Overture style, which morphed into a frequently used template for many Classical symphonies. While we don't encounter "themes" quite as elegant or evolved as we will in later works of Haydn and Mozart, we do encounter contrast in texture, flavor and dynamics. There is development activity in all movements, as well as dramatic harmonic activity and the setting up of expectations for arrivals and resolutions.

The opening movement *Allegro* is energetic and boisterous. Many of the busiest passages are written for first and second violins in unison, while in the contrasting themes the firsts and seconds alternate ideas.

The *Andante* is busy without being fast – an interesting experience for students. In many ways this is the most challenging movement to perform, technically for the violins, and in terms of tempo control (not rushing, and playing off the string at a slower tempo) for the lower strings.

The final *Presto* sounds most Classical in style, with clearly differentiated short themes. This is the movement in which the lower strings have more of a thematic role to play, rather than just supporting activity in the upper voices. When the violinists are playing sixteenth notes they are not actually the most important voice, they are creating an exciting accompaniment for the bass line. The moments when the orchestra plays in unison are especially fun. Straightforward dynamic and textural contrasts are easy to realize in performance.

This *Symphony* is a great opportunity to explore early classical style in an original, unarranged work. Unlike the popular, but difficult, Mozart *Divertimenti K. 136, 137 and 138* with their killer second violin parts, the technical demands here are more evenly distributed and the bass lines generally more interesting. Very rarely do violin parts leave first position. Some intermediate shifting is required (basses) but first position players could survive in all sections. The real challenge will be getting everyone off the string when required, to realize stylistically appropriate bowing.

LEARN MORE ABOUT GLUCK



Gluck, a composer in the early Classical style, is probably best known for his role as an opera reformer. Opera, in his time, had increasingly evolved into a vehicle for vocal virtuosity and often the story line was of secondary importance to composers, singers and audiences alike. Gluck, a principled purist, insisted that the role of music (especially as sung) was to illuminate the meaning of the words, in the greater service of the drama. His style is transitional, representing elements of both late Baroque, as well as moving towards the newer styles which were emerging in reaction to the stricter (and abstract) contrapuntal aesthetic, including "Empfindsamkeit" and "Sturm und Drang" (sensitive, dramatic and full of feeling and contrast.) As a transitional composer, he shares qualities with some of Bach's sons, who were his contemporaries. But Gluck was also a contemporary of Haydn and the young Mozart, and we can find similarities of style and approach with these composers as well.

PERCY GRAINGER

(1882-1961)

MOLLY ON THE SHORE

#01549 · GRADE IV+ OR EASY V

Molly on the Shore, an Irish reel, dates from Grainger's early years - and to the delight of string players, his string orchestra version was written years before his (perhaps) better known version for concert band. Unlike his settings of *Mock Morris* and *Shepherd's Hey*, *Molly on the Shore* is scored for a standard string orchestra. The violas open with a vigorous statement of the theme, complete with rapid triplet ornamentation, familiar to those who follow traditional music sessions in Irish pubs. Grainger spins out a piece where the reel theme is always present and always played in the same tempo, while the harmonies swirl and shift, often creating surprise in quick successions. He experiments with glissandi and fools with our notion of what drones should be in folk songs. He also delights us with beautiful countermelodies.

Molly on the Shore is an easy Grade 5, or advanced Grade 4, and very playable by high school groups. Every section is featured with thematic material, particularly violas and second violins (actually, more second violin features than any other piece I can think of!). Sometimes the music unfolds over a drone, at other times there is a chord change on each quarter note, giving us blisteringly fast harmonic motion. At times we feel as though we are sliding downhill on a slalom slope of descending chromatic chord changes, no two phrases quite alike. All players encounter chromatic passagework, and everyone stands to have their harmonic vocabulary stretched, but always anchored within tonal boundaries. *Molly on the Shore* is a favorite with groups of all ages and a hit with the audience. It's great to see a viola section play the opening from memory, having a good time.

LEARN MORE ABOUT GRAINGER



It would be difficult to single out a composer as being more singular than Percy Grainger; how many of us plan a museum celebrating our own lives and times? Grainger, a truly international soul, was born in Melbourne, Australia (the Australians claim him fervently), studied in Germany, as did most serious students of composition of his generation, roamed the English countryside collecting folk material and finished out his years in his adopted country of the United States. As Schumann and Hindemith insisted on using musical terminology in German, rather than the commonly used Italian, Grainger employed his own unique version of "blue-eyed English", giving us new ways of designating violas ("middle fiddles"), among others; crescendo molto becomes "louden lots", Ritardando becomes "slacken", and so forth. Grainger was always seeking unusual colors and textures and thought nothing of scrambling and challenging fixed notions of instrumentation.

EDVARD GRIEG

(1843-1907)

STRING QUARTET IN G MINOR, OP. 27 #10805 · GRADE VI (VERY ADVANCED)

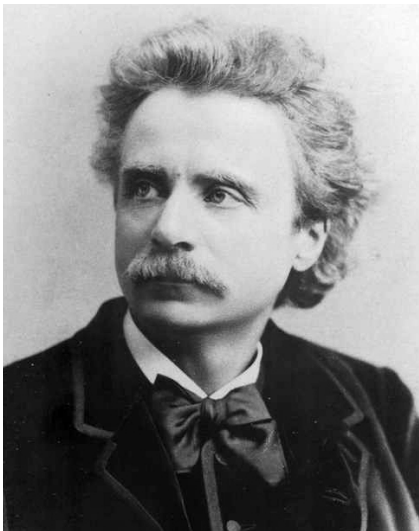
Ready for a Romantic tour de force? The Grieg *Quartet in g minor* lends itself to larger forces (its turbulent ideas almost refuse to be limited to chamber music) and students will find a universe of ideas and feelings in the four movements of this extraordinary work.

We tend to be most familiar with Grieg as a folksy miniaturist – one who uses ideas so simple they appear to be folk melodies, a composer who can harness the “gemutlich” (cozy, comfortable as a pair of slippers) qualities of a night around the fireplace with family, and reassure us with the safe predictability of four-bar phrases. Grieg embodies all of these qualities, **but so much more!** The amazing variety of moods and compositional techniques found in this quartet exceeds the scope and scale of his shorter, more familiar works, and the writing is more orchestral than some of his music for larger forces. It’s all in there – wild chromaticism, daring dynamic contrasts, bold strokes contrasted with intimacy - what a lucky break for string players!

Movement I begins with a boldly stated short intro (*Un poco Andante*) followed by an *Allegro molto ed agitato* – and agitated it certainly is! Even when soft, the opening idea swirls dangerously, and we’re just getting started! Throughout it all, it is definitely recognizable as Grieg, using some of his stock harmonic devices – but so much more, as he takes us through some almost atonal moments and surprise modulations. The second theme is romantic, the Grieg we know and love. We often hear the composer’s shorter works without real development of ideas – as this is an extended form, we are treated to some wild working out of issues, which can leave the listener breathless with its intensity. The surprises keep coming, as rising sequences and the close examination of motives take us places we never expected to visit. This is the Grieg of the *Piano Concerto*, but, in some ways, even more adventurous. The movement is also more extended than we expect, continuing to unfurl one surprise after another. Grieg can break our hearts with certain chord progressions, and he does so here. More than once we encounter false endings, only to resume the journey. This movement rocks in so many ways!

Movement II, *Romanze*, opens with a beautiful, sentimental cello solo, echoed by first violin and viola. Again, rapidly shifting harmonies keep us off balance, but the music is so beautiful, who could mind? An *Allegro agitato* follows, in many ways the most technically challenging segment of the entire piece. A slower tempo follows with an even more beautiful melody, if this could be imagined. Advanced technique is required of all players in this movement, as well as sophisticated musical understanding. Moods, keys and tempi shift rapidly, especially towards the end. This segmented movement brings rewards to the players able to negotiate its many demands.

Movement III, titled *Intermezzo*, shows the influence of both Brahms and Dvořák in its rhythmic approach. A *Scherzo* by another name, the hemiolas make the music swing, but we still recognize the music as Grieg. There is considerable alternating of major with minor. The trio is even more in the style of Grieg, with which we are most familiar – simple folk-like material, unfolding in an easy fugato, inviting us to dance. This *Intermezzo* is the shortest movement of the quartet and the most technically accessible.



Movement IV, simply titled *Finale*, is classic Grieg – we can sense all kinds of supernatural creatures of ancient northern legends coming to life, and our imagination is set loose on a fast and furious ride, with sharp turns and surprises. Consider *Hall of the Mountain King* upped by a factor of ten. Imagine a wild Norwegian tarantella – with trolls! When the meter changes from 6/8 to 2/4 the trolls scamper back under the bridge. The effects are almost cinematic – our imagination easily supplies stories to what we hear. Moments are supremely Halloweenesque in the images they conjure. The movement ends with very clever metric shifts, all creating more and more excitement.

For an advanced orchestra seeking a challenge, the Grieg *Quartet in g minor* offers much variety and will reward hard work with excellent and provocative music. Because of the length and complexity of each movement, it might be wise to consider programming individual movements rather than the entire quartet, which clocks in longer, and with more difficulties than the Tchaikowsky *Serenade*. The *Intermezzo* is shortest and the least difficult. The two outer movements are both great fun and full of atmosphere; even as they present many challenges, either would make a very dramatic closer for a concert.

HOWARD HANSON

(1896-1981)

RHYTHMIC VARIATIONS ON TWO ANCIENT HYMNS #01954 · GRADE ADVANCED III OR EASY IV

Hanson's *Rhythmic Variations on Two Ancient Hymns* was commissioned by ASTA for performance by the ASTA National Teachers Orchestra at the 1976 MENC National Convention in Atlantic City, NJ. Hanson was to have conducted, but illness prevented him from attending. During the years ASTA sponsored the National Teachers Orchestra, which gave its final performance in 1982, a work for string orchestra was commissioned by an American composer and performed during the convention, which was linked with MENC's National Convention. The purpose of the commissions was not only to generate new literature for string orchestra by significant American composers, but literature which could be also performed by student groups, as well.

Rhythmic Variations on Two Ancient Hymns is written in two sections, one for each hymn, connected by a short bridge. The music is playable and engaging. A beautiful violin solo is heard in the first hymn, in 5/4 time. Throughout the piece we find changing meters, but these are within a leisurely tempo and not difficult to negotiate. There is position work required, but it is player friendly and the tempi are not fast. The music is understated, yet gorgeous and we are lucky to have a work of intermediate difficulty from such a celebrated composer.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HANSON



Howard Hanson served America as a composer, conductor, educator and passionate advocate for American music and musicians. As head of the Eastman School of Music for 40 years, he made possible both the performance and recording of works by American composers, including emerging voices of a new generation. His goal was to link the great European traditions with new energies and perspectives found in America, helping usher in a distinctive American style and tradition. It would be difficult to overstate his impact on the opportunities made available to American composers who followed.

VICTOR HERBERT

(1859-1924)

THREE COMPOSITIONS FOR STRING ORCHESTRA #07066 › GRADE V

Herbert's *Three Compositions for String Orchestra* brings us three short, contrasting late nineteenth century flavors. The first, *Air de Ballet*, a sentimental stylized waltz with very idiomatic string writing, includes flourishes of up bow staccatos. The first violins carry most of the thematic material. On the written out D.C., a harp part, as well as a "toy triangle" are added for effect. The harp part is not difficult; though towards the end there are some chromatic alterations which require that a pedal harp (rather than lever harp) be used. The harp part could also easily be played on a keyboard. A charming countermelody for solo cello is also added in the D.C. There are divisi parts and position work for all sections. The flavor is fluffy and precious.

Forget-Me-Not is a pizzicato feature. There are a few arco passages, including a solo cello countermelody which functions as a euphonium line might on the repeated strain of a march (I'm thinking Alford's *Colonel Bogey*). This movement is great fun – a cakewalk-y ragtime mix of early jazz syncopation. There is position work and chromatic writing at a brisk tempo; if students have not built up callouses on their pizz fingers, they will have some after working on this piece!

Finally, *Sunset* will remind listeners of the Irish folk song "*The Last Rose of Summer*"; even the contours of the line are similar, and the double-dotted rhythms add a sentimental Celtic flavor. This slow movement serves as the collection's finale. As in all three pieces, there are beautiful lines for solo cello (Herbert's instrument!). Again, there is position work, some quite high but not fast, chromatic writing, an essential component of the style, and lush divisi; even the basses have a four-part soli chord at the end (Dvořák and Herbert were in each other's sphere). Each in a distinctly contrasting character, this Grade V work will provide a sophisticated musicianship challenge to an advanced high school or chamber orchestra.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HERBERT



For those who have not taken the time to experience the music of Victor Herbert – what a treat lies in store! A most amazing musical personality, the Irish composer, who spent his formative musical years in Germany, gave us two cello concertos, one of which was the inspiration for Dvořák to write his own! Herbert moved to America, where he, as did Dvořák, taught at New York's National Conservatory of Music. Long celebrated for his operettas, written for late nineteenth century Broadway, Herbert was also a serious composer. All American composers owe him a debt of gratitude, as he was instrumental in the founding of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers: ASCAP, a performing rights organization, just now celebrating its century mark, which generates revenues for composers from performances of their works.

ALAN HOVHANESS

(1911-2000)

PSALM AND FUGUE OP. 40A

#01150

A work of intermediate difficulty, the *Psalm and Fugue* includes extensive use of divisi throughout the violin, viola and cello parts. Wonderful soli passages in the *Psalm* feature the viola section at an Andante tempo. The *Fugue* is not technically difficult, and unfolds at a moderate tempo. Fifth position for first violin and thumb position notes are required for cello, both in a logical manner. The greatest challenge of this intriguing work is to sustain the sound and intensity.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOVHANESS



Of Armenian descent, American composer Alan Hovhaness was born with the name Alan Vaness Chakmakjian. He underwent several name modifications before settling on Hovhaness which he felt honored his ancestors while being easier to pronounce for Americans. He studied at both Tufts University and the New England Conservatory of Music. Hovhaness was fascinated by Armenian music and culture and his music is greatly inspired by his ancestry. This flavor gives his music a feeling of timelessness as it does not embody the direction of Western sensibility. Famous for destroying many of his early works (estimated between 500-1,000 pieces), he is one of the most revisionist-minded composers in history. Among the prolific twentieth century composers, Hovhaness' many compositions include over sixty-eight symphonies.

KAREL HUSA

(1921-2016)

PASTORAL FOR STRING ORCHESTRA #10686 › GRADE IV (MODERATELY DIFFICULT)

One of the most beloved and respected composers among us today, Karel Husa graciously answered the invitation of ASTA to compose a work for the National String Teachers' Orchestra which premiered the work at the 1980 Music Educator National Conference in Miami Beach, Florida; with Husa himself conducting. Comprised of ASTA members attending the biannual conference (before the days when ASTA had its own freestanding conference), the ASTA National Teachers' Orchestra commissioned works for performance at the National Convention from significant composers for several years. Part of the intention was to stimulate works of substantive composers that were playable by student orchestras.

Generally, Husa's compositional language can be challenging and much of his output is serial. *Pastoral for String Orchestra* draws its material from a much earlier violin sonata, a more tonal work that is tightly constructed, growing from unifying motives and moving through shifting sonorities and key areas in its own neo-Romantic language. The work offers an unusual synthesis of youthful exploration through a lens of maturity. Beginning slowly, the intensity grows, tempo quickens, and material is transformed before the piece relaxes and comes to a beautiful, yet ambiguous, ending. The work is not long, nor is it technically difficult. There are passages with many accidentals, but these are playable within the moderate tempi. Musicians are challenged to listen and discern the function of the notes they are playing in rapidly shifting tonal contexts. Husa, a violinist himself, understands and appreciates the needs of the orchestra.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HUSA



Born in Prague, Karel Husa emigrated to the U.S. by way of study in France. He is known for work in a variety of contrasting media, including string quartets (his third quartet won the Pulitzer Prize in 1969) and works for wind ensemble (1968's *Music for Prague*, which is perhaps his most recognized composition). A former member of the faculty at Cornell University, Husa is celebrated as a conductor and teacher as well as composer, and has influenced several generations of musicians. The significance of his music as a vehicle for social commentary holds a place in the Czech Republic similar to that of Shostakovich in the U.S.S.R.

LEOŠ JANÁČEK

(1854-1928)

IDYLL

#10274 · GRADE V+ OR PLAYABLE VI (ADVANCED)

Idyll for String Orchestra, from 1878 is a relatively early work, consisting of seven movements that are retro in flavor, echoing or evoking older styles, particularly Baroque, with a more modern tonal vocabulary. The opening movement, *Andante*, brings to mind a formal Baroque dance. The second movement, *Allegro*, calls to mind Dvořák's *Serenade for Strings*, folk melodies, and, once again, old-fashioned Baroque dances, all rolled together into a delightful Czech pastry.

Somehow, Janáček, ever the original, manages to make us feel as though the third movement, *Moderato*, is actually a Baroque dance, even in 5/4 time! He is so slick about it we never feel asymmetry of the fifth beat, nor notice when we segue into 3/4. The movement is absolutely charming. With echoes of Smetana, the fourth movement, *Allegro*, is elegant, tugging between major and minor keys. A bustling Baroque bass line reminds us of the styles melded together.

The fifth movement, *Adagio*, is a lament – do any composers capture “homesick” better than the Czechs? Is the music finally fully nineteenth century Romantic in style? A contrasting *Presto* manages, once again, to combine elements of Czech folk style with Baroque. The delightful sixth movement, *Scherzo*, has Czech folk dance flavor, very reminiscent of Dvořák, yet in a deliberately formal Baroque guise. This sweet and simple movement may be the most appealing of all and is more of a minuet than a scherzo. The seventh movement, *Finale*, is absolutely Czech, but also echoes Baroque in its formality and busy energy.

Janáček is an original, reflecting an amalgamation of boldly fused styles. What could be more fun than romance, Czech folk flavor and old-fashioned dances all rolled into a very playable suite? There is considerable chromatic writing, high position work, solo passages, and rhythmic challenges. That said, the music is approachable by student groups, particularly as it is early Janáček and the harmonic and rhythmic vocabulary is still traditional. The movements are not long and the material is not developed to the extent it is in the Dvořák *Serenade*, making *Idyll* easier conceptually. This beautiful Czech work by one of history's most original composers is well worth exploring.

LEARN MORE ABOUT JANÁČEK



The life of Czech composer Leoš Janáček straddled wildly different style periods from the Romantic legacy of Dvořák and Brahms into the twentieth century through several radical transformations of Stravinsky and others. It could be said that he brought a new “realism” to Czech opera; then again, the subjects of his operas were often fantastic and strange, including one about foxes and another about a woman who never dies. It is difficult to pin down a description of his composition style, which is so uniquely his own. Best known for his operas, he also left behind choral, orchestral and chamber music.

LEOŠ JANÁČEK

(1854-1928)

SUITE FOR STRINGS

#11061 › GRADE IV+

For those orchestras able to successfully navigate the Dvořák *Serenade*, the Janáček *Suite* is on a somewhat smaller scale, both in terms of structure and technical demands. We do hear breaths of Czech nostalgia as well as Romantic angst. The six movements are all shorter than the individual movements of the Dvořák. *Andante*, in particular, is as charming and simple as anything could be. The *Scherzo* movement does not rely on the usual Czech Furiant cross-rhythms, but leads us into some subtly different and new rhythmic conflicts. An *Adagio* is written for violins and viola alone, a very magical, high texture reminiscent of the *Prelude to Lohengrin*. At times, Janáček's phrase structure refuses to be pinned down, resulting in long lines inviting more than one possibility for shape. Alternating with simple folk like music are segments with challenging chromaticism, which are demanding both technically and musically.

The work typifies Janáček: a paradox of folk music simplicity combined with churning drama.

LEARN MORE ABOUT JANÁČEK



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VASSILI KALINNIKOV

(1866-1901)

CHANSON TRISTE FOR STRINGS

#08421

Best known for his imposing *First Symphony*, Vassili Sergeyevich Kalinnikov also left numerous songs and salon pieces for piano. Also arranged for violin and piano, this *Chanson Triste* is a beautiful miniature written with the uneven lilt of 5/4 time. Russian composers were known to wear their hearts on their sleeves and it is easy to imagine a short story to go along with this sighing little piece. Short, technically intermediate, but rich with feeling, this g minor work offers a wonderful gem of contrast when programmed between larger works.

LEARN MORE ABOUT KALINNIKOV



Born in Russia, at an early age Kalinnikov studied at the seminary in Oryol. He relocated to Moscow in 1884, with the goal of studying at the Conservatory. Unfortunately, due to financial hardships, he attended the Philharmonic Society School on scholarship. After graduation, Kalinnikov had the opportunity to meet Tschaikowsky. In 1892, Tschaikowsky recommended him to take the appointment of conductor at the Maly Theatre in Moscow and the Moscow Italian Theatre. Despite this success, Vassili's health deteriorated when he contracted tuberculosis, forcing him to relocate to a warmer climate. He lived in Yalta for the remainder of his short life and it was there that he completed many of his compositions, including his two symphonies and numerous instrumental works. Upon the good graces of Rachmaninoff (who visited Kalinnikov in Yalta), his compositions took notice and were purchased by the publisher Pyotr Jurgensen. Sadly, he did not live to see his works in print, passing away in January 1901 before his 35th birthday.

VASSILI KALINNIKOV

(1866-1901)

SERENADE IN G MINOR FOR STRINGS

#13565 › GRADE IV (INTERMEDIATE OR EASY ADVANCED)

Known for his massive *Symphony No. 1*, as well as small scale salon works, Kalinnikov delivers a taste of Russia in harmony with that of Tchaikowsky, but with his own distinctive voice. The *Serenade in g minor for Strings* is a salon style work, one which delivers charm and intimacy within a compact form. A gentle waltz (with surprises later!), it is neither technically difficult nor harmonically dense and does not surrender to the formal sprawl typical of late nineteenth century writing. Compared with the opening of the composer's first symphony which submerges the listener in contrary motion chromaticism immediately, as well as evoking modal Russian folk music, the *Serenade* is straightforward and cosmopolitan - we are not in for a long, wrenching ride, but a safe evening home with trusted friends.

The *Serenade* is in one movement, a waltz of moderate length with repeated thematic material and, essentially, two episodes of contrasting material. Unified and well-crafted, it does not wilt under its own sense of significance, but charms us instead, without much fuss or elaboration. As one would expect from late nineteenth century romantic musical language, there is chromaticism but it is not the first impression one takes from the work. The dynamics range from piano to forte, with a pianissimo ending and many growing and subsiding swells. The second of the two episodes ventures into more adventurous harmonic territory, where C-flat transitions to B Major, then to G Major, before ending in g minor. The surprise comes during the second episode where 4/4 bars are added to the ends of phrases to keep the music off-balance and a bit humorous.

The texture is uncomplicated, without divisi writing or any extended range requirements. There are a few bars for the cello in tenor clef, but these are not difficult. The work is marked *Andantino* and there is no fast or complicated passagework. The difficulties lie in achieving good intonation throughout, with all the chromatic alterations, as well as realizing the beauty and stylistic elegance of this charming work.

LEARN MORE ABOUT KALINNIKOV



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JEAN-MARIE LECLAIR

(1697-1764)

SONATA FOR STRING ORCHESTRA #01486 · GRADE IV

Violinists love the D Major Leclair *Sonata*, with its bold French opening, pure sunshine *Allegro*, contrasting *Sarabande* and famous *Tambourin* finale. In this realization of the sonata for full string orchestra, the thematic material is distributed amongst sections of the orchestra - the famous *Tambourin* theme of the finale appears first in the viola part, an octave lower than we are accustomed to hearing it. This gives all sections of the orchestra a chance to explore interesting ideas. There are a number of solo and soli passages. The music is neither technically, nor rhythmically difficult and is usually easy to hear. The *Tambourin* captures the sound of peasant drones and drums, as well as country fiddles.

Because the tempi should be upbeat, and some of the solo violin passages are demanding for a section to play together, this work is classed as a Grade IV. It is a pleasure to have this version of a great violin work to share with the entire orchestra.

LEARN MORE ABOUT LECLAIR

French violinist and composer, Jean-Marie Leclair was born in Lyons, France in 1697. Often referred to as “the elder” to distinguish him from a younger brother, Leclair began his career as a lace-maker, which was his father’s main trade. A master of lace-making by the time he was nineteen, his interest in the arts first emerged through dance, earning him a position with the Lyons Opera in 1716. Leclair then left his native Lyons to study dance and violin in Turin, where he tried his hand at composition, composing ballet interludes for opera productions at the Teatro Regio Ducale, famed opera company in Italy. Returning to Paris in 1723, Leclair saw the publication of his first *Twelve Sonatas for Violin and Continuo, Op. 1* confirming his success as a violinist and composer. While in Paris, he made his debut as a violinist at the Concert Spirituel, one of the first public concert series in existence in 1728, the same year his *Sonatas for Violin, Op. 2* were published.

Utilizing his Parisian upbringing, Leclair became well known for elegantly synthesizing his own musical heritage with those from the Italian influence. He particularly enjoyed working with and melding the



sonata da camera and sonata da chiesa form acquired largely from the ballet music of Jean-Baptiste Lully. Leclair’s music was respected for its balanced harmonies and rationality but more importantly, the avoidance of excess or exaggeration, personifying the ideals of the Age of Enlightenment.

Although respected as a composer, Leclair’s significance as a violinist brought him more notoriety than his place in composition. Performances of his own music in London and Paris (famed musical “duels” with violinist Locatelli) launched Leclair’s reputation and earned him the title as one of the founding fathers of the French school of violin playing. Appreciated for his beautiful, virtuosic sound, he also expanded violin technique to include left-hand tremolo (trills), double trills, and a variety of articulations.

FRANCESCO MANFREDINI

(1684-1762)

CONCERTO GROSSO OP. 3 IN C, No. 12 (CHRISTMAS CONCERTO) #08325

Christmas concertos were popular during the Italian Baroque, with Corelli's being the best known. In one way or another they all shared the features of pastorals or cradle songs which implied the gentle rocking of the Infant Jesus to sleep. Though other movements might be vigorous, these undulating cradle songs are usually the center of gravity of the multi-movement concerti.

This Christmas Concerto by Manfredini is technically comparable with the better known Corelli, and, in some ways, even more ingratiating. Written in three movements with the *Pastorale* opening the work, the piece calls for the usual concertini of two violins and cello. The work is in C major and easily approachable by most intermediate groups. The *Pastorale* is of sufficient substance to be performed as a stand alone movement.

LEARN MORE ABOUT MANFREDINI

Born during 1684 in Pistoia, Italy, little is known about Baroque composer Francesco Manfredini. The son of a trombonist, he was sent to Bologna to study violin with Giuseppe Torelli as a teenager. His skills as a violinist must have been excellent as he went on to hold major playing posts; including the famed Accademia Filarmonica in Bologna. Also interested in composition, Manfredini studied with Giacomo Antonio Perti, the maestro di capella of the Basilica of San Petronio.



Manfredini was not a prolific composer and many of his compositions were lost throughout the years. It is known that he wrote nine oratorios but only his secular works remain. There are forty-three published instrumental works, including groups of concerti grossi and sinfonias that show his prowess as a composer. After 1711, he joined the court of Prince Antoine I of Monaco, who was a pupil of Jean-Baptiste Lully.

Inspired by his stay in Monaco, Manfredini wrote many compositions while in the service of Prince Antoine, including his *Concerti Grossi for Two Violins and Basso Continuo, Op. 3, Nos. 1-12* which he published in dedication to the ruler. In 1724, he returned to Pistoia to take the post of maestro di cappella of the St. Philip's Cathedral, where he remained until his death in 1762.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

(1809-1847)

SINFONIA NO. VI IN E-FLAT #10532 › GRADE V

Sinfonia No. VI is written in three movements, all in the key of E-flat. Compared with some of his other string symphonies, the design of *No. VI* is compact and unified, and written for the traditional instrumentation of the string section. The outer movements are fast-paced and very busy, a lifelong hallmark of the composer's style. The middle *Minuetto* serves as contrast. Performed up to tempo, this work is ambitious and will suit an orchestra where all players can get around the instrument with precision. Known for his swift tempi, clean off-string passages and ensemble challenges; there is no faking in Mendelssohn! *Sinfonia No. VI* is actually of tighter construction and unity than some of the other longer sinfonias which can become fatiguing both for players and listeners. While perhaps not as well-known as *Sinfonia Nos. VIII* and *IX*, *VI* is great fun for everyone – a delicious party piece for the right high school orchestra.

LEARN MORE ABOUT MENDELSSOHN



When we think of prodigies, Mozart comes to mind, but we should not overlook the amazing early works of Felix Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn gave us twelve early symphonies for string orchestras of various configurations, all written between the ages of 12 and 14. His entire life was influenced by contrapuntal thinking, later to culminate in the role he played in bringing forgotten works of Bach to a public delighted to rediscover them. While there are instances of sprawling structures and coltish over-reaching in these early works, we are reminded that the amazing and mature *E-flat String Octet* was written when the composer was still a teenager. If ever counterpoint could dazzle and delight, Mendelssohn provides us with the evidence.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

(1809-1847)

STRING OCTET IN E-FLAT, OP. 20 #09033 · GRADE V (ADVANCED)

Who doesn't love the Mendelssohn *Octet*??? Scored for double string quartet, it is both a lyrical, as well as contrapuntal marvel written by a prodigious 16 year old composer. Mendelssohn wrote twelve early string symphonies when he was between 12 and 14 years old. These works are amazing and show us his ever more sure grasp of composition and mastery of counterpoint. By the time he reached the ripe old age of 16, he was ready to marry technical mastery with stunningly beautiful musical ideas, using the sound platform of the octet and its bonus possibility for extra-rich, close voicings. Other composers have written for octet or nonet, but no work can surpass the easy grace of Mendelssohn's. One can imagine a German contrapuntal work becoming a dense and heavy exercise, but Mendelssohn blows us away with his economy; each movement is over before we want it to be, and we are left wanting more (or to hear it all over again).

The work is not easy, but it is highly rewarding to practice and rehearse. The first violin part does move around a lot, reaching seventh position in several places; the other three violin parts are all equally active but are not written as high. Violas get to wail on the C string with some important passages; indeed, all instruments celebrate their lower ranges in this work – Mendelssohn can make the floor shake in the finale! The opening cello statement in the finale is more challenging than it sounds, due to the key and many knuckle-busting finger extensions, but what an accomplishment when it is finally mastered!

Movement I captures undulating accompaniment figures, for which Mendelssohn would later (*Violin Concerto*) become famous. This is the most lyrical of the movements, complicated, but a joy to play. Movement II is a minor key lament, elaborate in many ways and presenting a variety of rhythmic challenges. Mendelssohn was famous for his amazing scherzos and Movement III offers rapid figurations at a soft dynamic, similar to his *Overture to A Midsummer's Night Dream* (also written about the same time). This movement calls for tight precision from beginning to end.

Movement IV lends itself most to performance by student orchestras. While everyone is busy most of the time, the ranges are not high and the musical content, while complicated, is also approachable and never opaque. Mendelssohn pulls out all the stops, giving us one, two, three themes (including one quoted from Handel's *Messiah*), plus recapping one from the scherzo, which he goes on to develop simultaneously, giving us snippets of double fugatos and other sleights of hand. You do get the sense that he had a ball writing this movement. At times the sheer friction of all those busy parts, in close proximity to each other, is almost more excitement than we can handle. The climaxes will leave you exhausted.



Orchestras have played and recorded this work with full sections covering the parts, each ensemble providing its own solution for a bass part. It does not work to simply double the second cello part, because the two celli keep switching off with the bassline. **Luck's provides a carefully calibrated bass part for the fourth movement (*Finale*)** which addresses this, as well as offering breathing room during higher cello parts or lower, dense moments.

LEARN MORE ABOUT MENDELSSOHN

When we think of prodigies, Mozart comes to mind, but we should not overlook the amazing early works of Felix Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn gave us twelve early symphonies for string orchestras of various configurations, all written between the ages of 12 and 14. His entire life was influenced by contrapuntal thinking, later to culminate in the role he played in bringing forgotten works of Bach to a public delighted to rediscover them.

JOHANN PACHELBEL

(1653-1706)

GIGUE (FROM CANON AND GIGUE)

#01494 · GRADE III+ (UPPER INTERMEDIATE OR INTERMEDIATE)

We all know the *Canon in D*, but how many have experienced the very short *Gigue*, with which it is paired? Written for the same three violins and bass line as the *Canon*, the *Gigue* is a great palate cleanser after the endless repetitions of the *Canon* progression. Imitative, but not canonic, it is a joyful little dance with an active bass line that's fun for everyone. The third violin part does not require notes on the E string, and therefore could be played by violas reading treble clef. Very short (two Baroque halves, each repeated), each half builds to a rhythmic climax, showcasing the brilliance which an upper intermediate group can achieve.

LEARN MORE ABOUT PACHELBEL



German composer and organist, Johann Pachelbel is best known for his *Canon in D*. He composed a large body of both sacred and secular music, including works for organ. Pachelbel is considered one of the great organ masters before J.S. Bach.

SIR CHARLES HUBERT PARRY

(1848-1918)

AN ENGLISH SUITE #09876 › GRADE V

Containing seven fun to play sections, each movement in *An English Suite* has approachable technical demands while not being too lengthy. The *Prelude* is neo-Baroque, where Baroque rhythms are combined with Victorian harmonies. Sounding more difficult than it actually is to play, this movement is busy with violin passages that reach high Gs. *In Minuet Style* has lovely lines for viola and charmingly couples an older form with more advanced harmonic language. The *Saraband* offers drama and resembles the style and writing of Elgar. There are high Gs for both cello and bass, but the passages are logical and fall under the hand easily. Most technically difficult, the *Caprice* is a diversion requiring precision, speed, and technique to maneuver through changing harmonies and tonalities. The retro *Pastoral* was written in a manner similar to the *Gavotte* from Grieg's *Holberg Suite*, while the *Air* contains effective alternation of solo notes with tutti textures. The final *Frolic* movement is a fun fiddle tune that is great for featuring the first and second violin sections. It has also served as a theme song for one of New York's classical music stations. Keep arco accompaniments at the frog and off the string during repetitive rhythmic passages and in pizzicato sections, as they can easily be rushed.

LEARN MORE ABOUT PARRY



Sir Charles Hubert Parry is appreciated today as a quintessential English composer whose music conjures images of beautiful gardens and pleasant tea-times in an ordered world. He served on the faculty of Oxford and was the director of the Royal College of Music in London. Along with his university posts, his varied interests had him studying Law as well as serving as an underwriter for Lloyd's of London. Like others in his social class, the expectation at this time was to follow a more respectable career other than music. Eventually, music claimed more and more of his time as he gained success following his efforts. Mostly celebrated for his choral music, he also produced orchestral music and several works for strings.

GABRIEL PIERNÉ

(1863-1937)

SERENADE FOR STRINGS, OP. 7 #07232 · GRADE IV

Although the generic title *Serenade* gives no hint of any program, this short, one movement work is Spanish in flavor, with its guitar like accompaniment figures and flourishes in the melodic line. The work states that the bass part is optional, but using it clearly strengthens the effect. I had thought at first that the work was originally intended as a quartet, but the harmonic rhythmic double note figures in the second violin part do not lend themselves to double stops, and are marked *divisi*. The cello part is also divided so as to provide a bass line, in the event a bass player was not used. There are some similarities in flavor (not design or harmonic language!) with Hugo Wolf's *Italian Serenade*.

Pierné's *Serenade* is a straightforward, uncomplicated work, a no-sweat Grade 4. Its greatest strength is its uncomplicated structure, relative technical ease and charming flavor. As a piece of music it works structurally and ends leaving you wanting more. Its merits as a piece, with first violin playing the melody throughout, and the rest of the group providing rhythmic, harmonic and character support make it straightforward; to those who would want melodic material spread amongst the other voices, it just isn't that kind of piece. It's short – accept it as the charming bauble that it is – but is sure to please listeners, and there is much to be learned by the other sections from propelling the music and playing the accompanying roles well.

LEARN MORE ABOUT PIERNÉ



Frenchman Gabriel Pierné bridged substantial swaths of two centuries and experienced a time of many style changes. Composer, organist and conductor, he led the 1910 premiere performance of Igor Stravinsky's *Firebird* in Paris with the Ballets Russes. A student of both Franck and Massenet, he was well grounded in traditional writing, as were all graduates of the Paris Conservatoire.

GABRIEL PIERNÉ

(1863-1937)

SUITE OF DANCES, OP. 3: NO. 2: *CHANSON DE LA GRAND MAMAN* #01497 › GRADE III (INTERMEDIATE)

French composers who straddled the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Ravel, Chabrier, etc...) have brought us much music written in a nostalgic vein, where the twentieth century is overlaid atop much older Baroque dance forms. Even Chabrier with his witty twentieth century vocabulary, will use old-fashioned Baroque sequences before resuming faster harmonic motion. Gabriel Pierné brings us this understated, intimate *Chanson de la Grand Maman* from his *Suite of Dances* using a simple string quartet (a bass part has been added). The musical language is traditional but the charm reflects twentieth century wistfulness for an earlier time.

First violins need second position for the opening statement (what better way to practice this?). Cellos reach for an A above the open A string. Seconds and violas can remain in first position, though shifting for vibrato and smooth passagework is appropriate. The added bass part reinforces the bass line and is easy to play.

Think of this as a movement from a French *Holberg Suite*. Be ready to be charmed.

LEARN MORE ABOUT PIERNÉ



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GIACOMO PUCCINI

(1858-1924)

CHRISANTHEMUM FOR STRING QUARTET

#08446 › GRADE V

Written in a single night as an elegy in memory of the Duke of Savoy, *Chrysanthemum* is unmistakably Italian. Though the quartet did not feature in Italian music life the way it did in the central European countries during the nineteenth century, both Verdi and Puccini left known examples, of which this elegy is one. Most often performed as a string orchestra work, the music weeps with grief which is, at once, both theatrical and achingly private, operatic, yet intimate.

The string writing is “parlando” – many portamentos which seek to imitate the feeling and rhythm of speech. It lends itself to expressive slides and carefully shaped phrases (and notes) in which the whole world seems present. The chromaticism requires good listening and attention to intonation, but the tempo is always spacious to accommodate these challenges. For performance with multiple strings and conductor, it will demand the highest level of ensemble precision, awareness and unity of purpose – but what a beautiful payoff!

LEARN MORE ABOUT PUCCINI



Puccini was born in Tuscany, into a family that had been participating in the music of the ancient town for five generations. Forced to study music at an early age, he was considered by his teachers to be a poor and undisciplined student. Not accepting his laziness, Puccini's mother hired a tutor from the Conservatorio Musici who encouraged him to write his first small compositions. It was this experience that led him to realize he was destined to have a career in opera, and inspired him to attend the Milan Conservatory. Upon leaving the Conservatory, Puccini entered a competition for a one-act opera in 1882. Although he did not win, his composition took notice by the head of Ricordi music publishers. His relationship with Ricordi was long and successful, receiving multiple commissions and publishing many of his works. By the end of his life Puccini wrote a total of twelve operas earning him a place in history as one of the most important Italian opera composers in the generation following Verdi.

HENRY PURCELL

(1659-1695)

DOUBLE DEALER SUITE

#05948 · GRADE III+ (UPPER INTERMEDIATE OR INTERMEDIATE)

Suite of Music from “*The Double Dealer*”, a play by William Congreve, with music by Henry Purcell was first produced in London (1693).

The Double Dealer is not an opera— only one actual song is included. The incidental music is meant to accompany dances or provide atmosphere (much like scenery), and is every bit as critical to the story. The *Suite* from the play includes an *Overture*, very much in the formal French style, and several *Dances* and *Airs*. Those familiar with Purcell’s opera *Dido and Aeneas* will recognize his style, including a vigorous and contrapuntal *Overture*, followed by short, concise forms based on song style (*Air*) or familiar dances written for an orchestra of string players.

The music of Purcell is straightforward and does not make great technical demands on today’s players. The *Overture* is the most challenging, with linked dotted rhythms requiring fast shifts and string crossing, especially for the lower strings. Rhythmic precision is required in both the opening slow section as well as the subsequent *Allegro Ritmico*. The concluding *Andante Maestoso* rounds out the French overture construction. The *Dances* and *Airs* which follow are not difficult, but the fast tempi should be realized.

The *Double Dealer Suite* indicates that it is edited by P. Stassevitch, who provides some bowings and articulation marks, as well as copious dynamics, which are clearly **not** Purcell’s and **do not need to be followed**. The edition dates from a time when it was common to add romantic range (crescendos, etc.) to Baroque works, but recent studies regarding period instrument awareness have caused scholars to rethink and reevaluate. This conflict provides students and teachers with a springboard for discussion of style and how performance practice from one era may conflict or contradict with that of another. It has never been more possible to compare recordings and editions, and students should find it fascinating to contrast Baroque performances recorded in the mid-twentieth century with those of today.

LEARN MORE ABOUT PURCELL

Henry Purcell is considered the most pivotal figure in English Baroque music and opera. In his writing for the stage, he is celebrated for crafting songs which maximize the effectiveness and clarity of the English language when set to music. A practical composer, his music generally lies in the “sweet spot” for both singers and instrumentalists.



During the Commonwealth years in England (1649-1660), Oliver Cromwell’s influence as Lord Protector dampened the expression of English theatre, as well as other aspects of life in England, Scotland and Ireland. A fiercely religious Puritan, Cromwell concerned himself with spiritual and moral reform. When the monarchy was restored in England with King Charles II, a period known as the Restoration began which witnessed a reawakening of theatre and the blossoming of English Opera, in which Purcell played a leading role. Restoration comedies were witty, highly mannered, at times more than suggestive, and involved depictions of the upper classes and their usually tangled intrigues involving love, influence and money. Double dealings were the backbone of many such comedies, with fast moving and complicated plots, shifting allegiances and backstabbing. It was not uncommon to give characters names which spoke to their vices and shortcomings (Lord Froth, Sir Plyant and Maskwell – who, in this case, is the double dealer).

CARL REINECKE

(1824-1910)

SERENADE FOR STRING ORCHESTRA #11369 › GRADE V

Composed ca. 1898, this work is one of the turn of the centuries best kept secrets. Lush, capricious, contrapuntal (in the best of the German tradition), retro, romantic - the six movements of Reinecke's *Serenade for Strings* has it all. Lush chromaticism is a feature in all of the movements, but never to the point of putting the music out of reach of advanced students. A *March*, an *Arioso*, a *Scherzo*, a *Cavatine* (in 5/4), a knuckle-busting chromatic *Fughetta Giojosa*, capped by a catchy *Finale* bring a universe within one piece. A solid Grade V, this work deserves to be explored and engaged by those groups looking for a substantive alternative to the Serenades of Tchaikowsky and Dvořák. The bright and boisterous *Finale* is especially suited to student groups.

LEARN MORE ABOUT REINECKE



German composer, conductor, and performer, Reinecke progressed in his musicianship quite rapidly and was considered a first rate orchestral violinist by the age of eighteen; however, he is more well known for his talent as a pianist. As a young adult, he settled in Leipzig to pursue his musical education, studying and embracing the ideals of Schumann and the Mendelssohn society. His exposure to the likes of these compositional greats later show as an inspiration in his works. Reinecke committed all his efforts towards composition, resulting in the publication of almost 300 works. Although he is best known for writing cadenzas for other works and his flute sonata "*Undine*", he also wrote countless works for piano, concertos for violin, cello, harp and flute, string quartets, trios, cantatas, masses, symphonies and 3 operas. He taught for 35 years and inspired many students, who in turn became well respected composers, including Grieg, Janáček, Albéniz, Svendsen, Franck, Weingartner, Bruch and many more.

CARL REINECKE

(1824-1910)

TWELVE TONE PICTURES FOR STRING ORCHESTRA #11078 · GRADE IV (MODERATELY DIFFICULT)

For those unfamiliar with the music of German composer Carl Reinecke – what a find!!! His *Serenade for Strings in g minor* is an absolute blockbuster with one of the most rockin' finales for strings since Tschaikowsky. An easier work (and a very intriguing one indeed) is his *Twelve Tone Pictures for String Orchestra*. A collection of short movements, some refer to E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Nutcracker* story, others to various sources in mythology or literature. All are meant to evoke moods or pictures (like the ticking of Drosselmeyer's clock, for example). Individual movements may be extracted and performed as freestanding works. These works can call to mind the miniatures of Grieg in the construction and Nordic flavor (Reinecke was born on the outskirts of Hamburg at a time when the region was ruled by Norway).

The pieces are short and any development is brief, limiting musical and technical difficulties. Even in the movements which appear most frightening (*Nordic Romance*), the difficult passages exist in the accompaniment, which are logical and easy to hear. This work includes the following movements:

- 1 *Trauermusik aus "Zenobia"*
- 2 *Pastorale "Ihr Hirten erwacht" (Christmas song)*
- 3 *Marchen – Vorspiel*
- 4 *Kaempevisa (Altnordisches Lied)*
- 5 *Aus "Tausend und eine Nacht"*
- 6 *Frieden der Nacht*
- 7 *Nordische Romanze*
- 8 *Friedensmarsch aus "Zenobia"*
- 9 *Weihnachtsabend (from Music for Hoffmann's Fairy Tale "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King")*
- 10 *Drosselmeyer's Uhrenlied (from Music for Hoffmann's Fairy Tale "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King")*
- 11 *Minuetto*
- 12 *Balletmusik (from Fairy Opera "Prinzessin Gluckskind")*

LEARN MORE ABOUT REINECKE



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OTTORINO RESPIGHI

(1879-1936)

SUITE IN G MAJOR FOR STRINGS AND ORGAN #13591 › GRADE V (DIFFICULT)

The unusual *Suite in G Major for Strings and Organ* offers four movements, each evoking older styles and flavors:

1. *Preludio*
2. *Aria*
3. *Pastorale*
4. *Cantico*

The *Preludio* brings to mind immediately the grandeur of Bach, where fast notes in the violin hover above the slower movement of the organ. This is glorious music, Baroque as re-interpreted through a modern, romantic lens. A Toccata feeling prevails, as though the music is being composed on the spot.

The *Aria* moves back and forth between major and minor, with rich textures from divided violas. The organ is not always present, which enables it to contribute texture changes. Respighi employs a wide, romantic, range of dynamics.

The 12/8 *Pastorale* (does anyone write more beautiful pastorals than the Italians? Think Corelli Christmas Concerto!) brings the richness of divided violas and cellos to the middle textures of this minor key *Pastorale*. The movement unfolds with unhurried leisure, and the long, long tonic pedal at the end reinforces the organ's unique contribution.

The final movement, *Cantico*, begins with simple chord progressions with organ alone, leading to a slow unfolding of polyphonic ideas. The ending builds the music to a glorious high point of ecstasy.

For best results, this work should be performed in a church with resonant acoustics and a pipe, or high quality electronic organ. When performing in a school, and using multipurpose electronic keyboards, be sure to allow for the organ pedal part. It is not recommended to use an acoustic piano for the organ part.

There are divided violas and cellos through much of the piece, requiring position work. The violin parts reach high positions, but, because the composer is himself a player, it is all very logical. None of the tempi themselves are fast, but there is fast movement within slow tempi (in some ways, more difficult.)

LEARN MORE ABOUT RESPIGHI



Respighi loved looking back; it was a quality shared by a number of his early Twentieth Century Italian composer colleagues. We can cite many famous compositions: *Ancient Airs and Dances*, *La Boutique fantasque*, *Trittico Boticelliano*, and more, which use either older folk-like material, or the music of Nineteenth Century composers (Rossini) as primary subject matter. Even in his powerful Roman tone poems (*Pines of Rome*, *Fountains of Rome*, *Roman Festivals*) the music, while modern in some ways, is also nostalgic and retro – as listeners we are dazzled, but seldom shocked. Respighi was interested in the music of his Italian predecessors of centuries past and does not hesitate to evoke these styles, including those reaching far back.

A violinist and violist, as well as pianist, Respighi studied for several months in St. Petersburg with that ultimate orchestral colorist, Rimsky-Korsakoff. These backgrounds gave him a sure hand in writing beautiful and playable music for strings.

CARLO RICCIOTTI

(1681-1756)

CONCERTINO NO. 2 IN G

#11362 · GRADE IV

From the collection *Six Concertini for Strings*, No. 2 in G is, in many ways, the most fun of the set. With very modest technical demands, this robust selection offers thematic material for all sections. The violins are divided into four sections, making it possible to assign intermediate players to lower parts. First violins reach fifth position and there is shifting required of the cellos and basses. Short eighth and quarter notes should be kept at the frog, while more bow may be used for sixteenth notes. Transitional writing with many V7 chords brings the best of the Baroque and Classical eras together, creating a piece that is both rich and intriguing!

LEARN MORE ABOUT RICCIOTTI



At different times on recordings and, in some cases, print, the set of *Six Concertini for Strings* has been credited to Giovanni Pergolesi, Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer, Carlo Ricciotti, and Johann Adam Birkenstock. The present consensus is that these works are from the pen of Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer (1692-1766) of the Netherlands, though published under the name of Carlo Ricciotti, an Italian violinist and impresario. Ricciotti continues to be credited with the work in present day, furthering the mystery around the true composer of this delightful piece of music.

FRANZ SCHREKER

(1878-1934)

INTERMEZZO, OP. 8

#09879 · GRADE V (TECHNICALLY); GRADE VI (MUSICALLY)

It is noted that Schreker experimented with timbre and texture, and this is evident in his first significant work, the *Op. 8 Intermezzo* for strings, which he scores for a double divided orchestra of Violins I, II, III and IV, Violas I and II, Cellos I and II, and Bass. This formula makes possible lush textures and rich, tightly voiced, yet doubled chords, essentially doubling the number of cards in the composer's deck. The work progresses through swiftly changing moods and characters, caroming between major and minor, fast and slow, wistful and joyous, but always rich and satisfying. *Intermezzo* is really not very long, clocking in at less than seven minutes, yet we feel as though we've been through a tour of the universe and partaken of many intersecting stories. The language is adventurous, tonally extended, but still tonal, even as the ground can seem to shift from bar to bar.

A Grade V technically and a Grade VI musically – students confronting this work will have many ideas to chew on and should emerge feeling well fed, having sunk their teeth into such rewarding textures and considered the many small dramas within. When the four violin parts are bunched up high, everyone must listen carefully. The material is well distributed amongst the sections of the orchestra, giving everyone satisfying parts to play. Since the work is placed within the framework of f-sharp minor and F-sharp Major, students must not be squeamish about E-sharps, B-sharps or F-double sharps; this is music for groups who have learned their scales and asked for more. The passion and drama, possible within a doubly divided orchestra and advanced harmonic language, are ample rewards for confronting the challenges of Schreker's *Intermezzo*. Every fine high school group, which has performed Dvořák or Tchaikovsky *Serenade* movements, should add this work to its menu – a musical steak dinner!

LEARN MORE ABOUT SCHREKER



Franz Schreker spent his career in Austria and Germany, a steep trajectory, as well as an unfortunate decline, due in part to anti-Semitism. His harmonic language shows the influence of the changing times and styles around him, especially living and working in the midst of extraordinary musical tides and political climates in Central Europe.

JOHANN STAMITZ

(1717-1757)

THREE MANNHEIM SINFONIAS #01616 · GRADE IV+

This delightful set of works in the keys of G, A, and B-flat Major takes full advantage of multiple stops, chords, and fiddle writing that lays easily under the hand and is fun to play. The fast movements are vigorous and the contrasting slow movements are not particularly fussy or florid, though they include some ornamentation.

In the *Allegro* sections, musicians should approach the playing as they would a work by Haydn or Mozart: eighth and quarter notes off the string and at the frog, and sixteenth notes on the string. Stamitz's players would have followed the general rule of the down bow, where the strong beat would begin with a down bow. In *Concerto No. 1 in G*, the first violin parts reach to sixth position, requiring high Gs. Unusual writing for its time, these passages are both logical and easy for players to find and hear. Cello and bass parts reach high F's on occasion and require third, fourth and fifth positions. The second violin and viola parts do not require extended ranges, making this work practical for an upper intermediate orchestra. The slow movements transition between different keys and requires the low strings to use extension notes such as G-sharp and A-sharp.

LEARN MORE ABOUT STAMITZ



As a result of the ongoing cultural and political flux in Central Europe, Johann Stamitz spent a significant amount of time moving about Europe. As a result, he is claimed by many European cultures including the Germans, Czechs, Austrians and the French as their own. Born in Bohemia, he is associated with the development of the Symphony as a serious musical form. Stamitz contributed to the evolution of four-movement format works, moving away from the German and French Suite of Dance movements or the three-part Italian *Sinfonia*. Borrowing from Italian opera, he became known for using the crescendo as a dramatic device and made his orchestra famous for the appropriately named "Mannheim Crescendo". Bridging the Baroque and Classical stylistic periods together, his works are noted as providing the scaffolding for the later writings of Haydn and Mozart.

WILLIAM GRANT STILL

(1895-1978)

DANZAS DE PANAMA #11515 · GRADE IV

Danzas de Panama should be an established part of the repertoire, both for student and professional groups. While there are a few rhythmic challenges, mostly involving the tension between duple and triplet figures, these represent an important aspect of the local Panamanian styles Still captured in this work. The left hand demands are modest and the music is immediately gratifying. Students will enjoy tapping rhythms on their instruments, and passages of rapidly alternating pizzicato and arco are also percussive and great fun. Separated into four movements, *Tamburito*, *Mejorana*, *Punot*, and *Cumbia*, this work can be characterized as a solid Grade IV. The musical and rhythmic language is easy to hear and should draw out wonderfully expressive playing from student groups. There was a time when this work was known to teachers and students; it clearly deserves a place in the library of every high school orchestra.

LEARN MORE ABOUT STILL



A true pioneer of his time, William Grant Still is often referred to as the “Dean of American Negro Composers” and holds the distinction as the first African American to be embraced by the symphony orchestra culture in the United States. A distinguished career with many “firsts”, Still was the first African American to have a symphony performed by a major U.S. symphony orchestra. Perhaps his best-known composition, *Afro-American Symphony* was premiered in 1931 by the Eastman-Rochester Philharmonic, conducted by Howard Hanson. *Troubled Island*, Still’s second opera was also the first to be produced by a major U.S. company (the New York City Opera) in 1949. In addition to his compositional performance credits, Still was also the first African American to conduct a major American orchestra (Los Angeles Philharmonic in 1936 at the Hollywood Bowl) and ensembles in the deep south (New Orleans Philharmonic in 1955) which was unheard of in his time.

JOHANN JR. & JOSEF STRAUSS

(1825-1899 & 1827-1870)

PIZZICATO POLKA #06781 › GRADE III+

Put the bows down for a delicious Viennese torte! (Pun intended!) One can imagine the fun the brothers had writing this polka.

The *Pizzicato Polka* is a delightful bon-bon of a polka, which showcases all of the things string players can do without using bows. The music is light and not difficult. The multiple stops in the *Trio* are especially effective, making the orchestra ring. Though not marked, like so many works of this Viennese style, it is customary to take playful liberties with the tempo. Easy shifting and multiple stops; absolutely NO BOWING PROBLEMS! A delicious encore!

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE STRAUSS BROTHERS



The brothers Johann Jr. and Josef Strauss, along with father Johann Sr. and brother Eduard, gave nineteenth century Vienna some of the most delicious popular song and dance music ever written. Waltzes, Polkas, other dances, and, of course, operettas issued forth from the family's tuneful imagination. There is the story of Brahms writing out the opening phrase of the *Blue Danube Waltz*, signing "unfortunately NOT by Johannes Brahms." All composers want to be taken seriously, but to achieve popular status would be the ultimate, if guilty, success, and here the Strauss family dominated.

Pictured: Eduard, Johann Jr., Josef Strauss

JOSEF SUK

(1874-1935)

SERENADE, OP. 6 FOR STRINGS #08667 › GRADE V+ (ADVANCED, PROFESSIONAL)

The son-in-law of Antonin Dvořák, Suk took the Czech musical vocabulary into the twentieth century, retaining the romanticism, but expanding the tonal and chromatic possibilities. The similarities with the Dvořák *Serenade* are immediately apparent, especially in mood, but Suk does present an individual voice. The opening movement has moments almost unbearably precious and intimate. The tonal shifts are generally on a greater scale than Dvořák, but the development section is not as involved (which makes the work less formidable!).

The second movement scherzo offers a real ear-worm of a tune (it will not leave you alone!), as well as typical Czech hemiola passages. The trio visits third-related G flat, typical of works from late romantic writers, again giving us passages of achingly beautiful nostalgia. The transition back to the recap is dramatic, almost telling a graphic story.

Divided celli open the slow movement, and from the first notes we are at the warm fireside of a Czech grandmother, cat on the rug, memory album open to earlier days. It would be difficult to think of a more warm and intimate musical mood (though the Dvořák *Nottorno* comes to mind!) than Suk presents here. In many ways, this movement is the center of gravity of the *Serenade*. After what feels like (very!) extended farewells, we modulate to another third related key for a contrasting middle section, less settled, but no less intimate. Some very chromatic, as well as Czech modal writing finally brings us back to the opening material. This movement presents us with many challenges on multiple levels: expressiveness, upper position work, rhythmic interplay, chromaticism, but what a musical payoff for those who see it through!!

A rip-roaring finale closes the work. A lot of figuration dresses up a relatively straightforward theme. There is rapid modulation touching on some far-off corners of the tonal universe (watch for tertiary relationships phasing in and out of focus). An unexpected and contemplative *meno mosso* leads us further away from what we might expect. More development follows, with accompanying rapidly shifting tonalities (and some augmented chords). Yet another *meno mosso* fools us into relaxing, but Suk has more action to bring the piece to a rocking conclusion, with a *vivace*, this time firmly rooted in a familiar nineteenth century language. If students have studied the Dvořák *Serenade*, this exquisite serenade by Suk is a logical next step.

LEARN MORE ABOUT SUK



Czech composer and violinist, Josef Suk, was a pupil of and later son-in-law of Antonin Dvořák. Known as a great leader of composing with extended harmonies, his works became a bridge between nineteenth-century nationalism and the atonality of twentieth century composition.

GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN

(1681-1767)

CONCERTO FOR TWO VIOLAS AND STRINGS IN G #11724 · GRADE III+ (UPPER INTERMEDIATE OR INTERMEDIATE)

Telemann's *G Major Concerto for Viola and Strings* is a gift which nourishes intermediate violists everywhere, and is rewarding for intermediate orchestras collaborating with the soloists. Less well-known is the *Concerto for Two Violas and Strings*, also in G. Featured in Suzuki viola materials, it provides both the soloists, as well as the ripieno orchestra, lots of fun and busy lines which are not difficult to play. Written in four short movements, this straightforward music is filled with stock Telemann Baroque devices, used to good effect. While the solo viola parts do reach into third position, the orchestral violin parts stay within first position range and only the bass requires some second or third position work, briefly. This is an excellent work to feature solo violas or even multiple players, as well as a good "switchover" piece for violins looking to learn alto clef and double (many of the violin and viola lines are the same).

LEARN MORE ABOUT TELEMANN



Telemann enjoys a place in the Guinness Book of Records as history's most prolific composer. Easy to dismiss as all-purpose generic Baroque composer, he can actually rival Bach for power and drama, Handel for charm and Vivaldi for sheer fun. We are well-served to explore him further.

GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN

(1681-1767)

LITTLE DANCE SUITE IN D FOR STRINGS (CONCERTO A 4) #01531 · GRADE III (INTERMEDIATE)

Georg Philipp Telemann is considered one of the most (if not *THE* most) prolific composers in history. A facile musician, almost entirely self-taught, he could play a number of instruments and just never seemed to run out of ideas.

One thing for certain about Telemann: he will please. His music does not set out to prove anything or to provoke, but simply to draw the listener in. The *Concerto a 4* in D Major can be played by large or small forces; as chamber music or as an orchestral work with basses. A cembalo part is included, but it simply reinforces what is already happening in the strings. The music is satisfying to play; a broad Baroque stroke of intermediate difficulty. The concerto is comprised of three movements, not exactly using the French template of dance forms, but sort of mixing and matching and keeping the suite on the short side. It opens with an *Allemande*, with those wonderful broad 16th note strokes in the violins. A *Ballo* follows, in 2/4 time, neither difficult, nor complicated. The suite ends with a *Giga*, where the texture changes to melody, harmony, with the two violin parts in unison. Again, the ideas are ingratiating and the demands are simple.

While the *Allemande* does require good rhythm, the range and technical demands are modest with first violins needing some third position. This work would suit a younger group, which is transitioning from arrangements to standard literature. The students will love this.

LEARN MORE ABOUT TELEMANN



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GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN

(1681-1767)

NATIONS ANCIENT AND MODERN OVERTURE #06865

One of history's most prolific composers, Telemann was a contemporary of J.S. Bach and Handel, outliving them both as his life overlapped the newer Classical Style. Having left over 3,000 extant works, it is no surprise that he, like Bach and Handel, suffered from deteriorating eyesight.

Telemann linked styles from his native Germany with those of France, Italy and Poland for a "modern" amalgamation, a cosmopolitan approach, absorbing these various national influences. He wrote a considerable number of suites (also called overtures, or ouvertures), some of which have programmatic subtexts (*Don Quixote*) and a number of which are very approachable by today's student string orchestras. *The Overture des Nations Anciens et Modernes* is written in French overture (suite) style and links together dances in "old" and "new" styles of the day.

The music is straightforward and technically at an easy intermediate level. In the sunny key of G major, the French overture is followed by short dances in which all sections share in the interesting material. The music is never labored and one has the sense that Telemann was thoroughly enjoying himself while writing this music.

LEARN MORE ABOUT TELEMANN

German Baroque composer, Georg Philipp Telemann is one of the most famous and prolific composers of his generation. Born in 1681 in Magdeburg to a long history of clergyman, it was expected that he would follow in the footsteps of the family work tradition. Almost completely self-taught and of exceptional musical ability, he went against his family's wishes to pursue his love of music and composition. Showing incredible musical talent, Telemann had mastered the flute, violin, zither, keyboard, and wrote his first opera by the age of ten.

Upon his mother's insistence, Telemann attended the University of Leipzig to study law. He had no intention of stifling his desire for music and within a year of attending the university he had founded the *Collegium Musicum*, a group for students which gave public concerts and was later conducted by



Bach. Establishing himself as a professional musician and becoming absorbed in the musical culture of Leipzig, Telemann wrote operatic works for the Leipzig Theatre, became music director of the Leipzig Opera in 1703, and was appointed organist at the Neue Kirche in 1704. He went on to hold multiple posts before settling in Hamburg in 1721 after being invited to work as Kantor of the Johanneum Lateinschule and musical director of the city's five largest churches. He remained in Hamburg until his death in 1767.

Telemann was regarded in Bach's time as one of the greatest living composers. Still influential in the current day, his works are known worldwide and include forty-six passions, twelve cantata cycles (over one thousand total), thirty operas, church compositions, oratorios, overtures, concertos and chamber works.

GIUSEPPE VERDI

(1813-1901)

STRING QUARTET IN E MINOR #540-3034 › GRADE VI (ADVANCED)

Verdi's musical identity is so wrapped up in his operatic output, that it is easy to overlook his one significant chamber work, his *String Quartet in e minor*, and what a disciplined composer he was when freed from the need to write text-driven music. The quartet has been performed and recorded as a string orchestra work and it will reward any group which studies it.

The first movement is filled with drama and passion, but within strict "German" parameters of good counterpoint and disciplined, but intensely chromatic language. The structure is tight, but the musical material develops well and really stays with us. This is opera, but not tied to the limitations of the voice!

The second movement, *Andantino* is precious and visits some far away key areas (six flats). The chromaticism is intense, but Verdi's hand is so sure, it all seems natural and organic. There are some very satisfying passages for string players. Overall, an interesting contrast to the other movements.

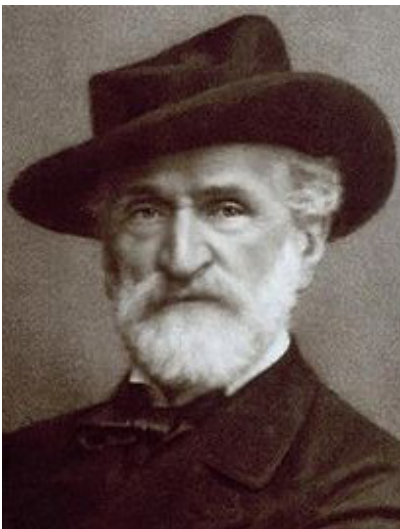
The third movement, *Prestissimo* serves as a scherzo, and is great fun to play. The terrific trio theme in the cello IS OPERA (without any words) and Italian to the core. SING!

The finale is entitled *Scherzo Fuga*, an oxymoron if ever there were one – scherzi are supposed to be fun, while fugues are serious business. However, Verdi does manage to combine these two very different agendas, again, in a tight, but expressive final movement.

All movements will require off-the-string bowings – a LOT. There are a considerable number of unison passages, which rehearse well because they are unison, but are usually also chromatic, not the strength of most string students... The bowings called for are exacting, but none are exceptionally difficult.

It is in the fast execution of chromatic passages, whether in unison or in tight harmony, that the greatest challenges for students will lie. The quartet is not long, nor does it push structural boundaries, but it is very demanding, assuming bowing skills are second nature so that the left hand passages can be realized without sounding like a struggle. The range sometimes goes beyond fifth position, but usually with logical scale passages.

An edited bass part has been included to facilitate orchestral performance.



LEARN MORE ABOUT VERDI

Without the nineteenth century operas of Verdi and Wagner, the twentieth century would not have enjoyed the wealth of stories combined with music which have evolved into television and the movies. Giuseppe Verdi was the unparalleled master of using music to heighten dramatic situations and his operas can make us cry or rock us to our foundations. Verdi used his orchestra as a Greek chorus, which would comment on what a character had just said or add strong musical exclamation points to nail home an idea.

PETER WARLOCK

(1894-1930)

SIX ITALIAN DANCES

#10848 · GRADE III

Best known to string players for his *Capriol Suite for Strings*, Warlock composed songs, choral works, and held a long interest in Elizabethan flavored music. Folk music was of great interest to him. Essentially self-taught, he is best described as a “miniaturist”, one who is most comfortable working in short forms.

It is with very short forms that he presents his *Six Italian Dances*. Transcribed from a set of part-books found in the British Library and known to have been the property of an English family prior to 1580, these dances bring a taste of the popular music of the sixteenth century to string players today. Written for two violins, viola and cello, it is recommended for modern orchestras to double the cello with bass at the octave. The music can work for groups of any size, from one on a part, to large numbers. Depicted by crossing arrows in the score, Warlock shows where he reassigned notes to modern instruments in places where the original older instruments had ranges differing from those of today. He also added some accidentals, which he felt were justified by the *musica ficta* rules of the day.

Employ modal key signatures (think Bach *Sonata in g minor*) and there are some instances of hemiolas, consistent with the older style. Best of all – **The *Six Italian Dances* are even EASIER to perform than *Capriol Suite*!** There are no extended ranges, everything works in first position, with very few notes leaving the basic finger positions. Teachers are advised to add bowings and use a double bass with the cellos. The music, consistent with its time, offers no dynamics – and really, none are needed. This work includes the following six dance tunes:

- 1 *Zorzi*
- 2 *La Gamba*
- 3 *Paduana del Re*
- 4 *La Manfrolina*
- 5 *Le Forze D’Hercole*
- 6 *El Saltarello*

LEARN MORE ABOUT WARLOCK



Philip Arnold Heseltine, who adopted the pseudonym Peter Warlock for his musical compositions, holds one of the more unusual and colorful composer biographies. Born in London’s Savoy Hotel, he was active as a music critic and journalist, traveling and residing in a variety of locations. Often, he shared quarters with other musicians or other creative personalities, sometimes creating a wild and scandalous atmosphere. He also developed an interest in the occult, hence his choice of Warlock as his composer pen name. Warlock never managed to settle down to any successful endeavor for very long, and grew depressed towards the end of his short life. He was found dead in his home from coal dust poisoning (the windows and doors had been tightly closed), and many have surmised that was by his own devising.

DAG WIREN

(1905-1986)

SERENADE FOR STRINGS

#10808 › GRADE V

Written in a retro, Swedish neo-Classical style, the four-movement *Serenade for Strings* offers easily hummed tunes presented with grace and good humor. The *Preludium* offers inner rhythm of nearly consistent sixteenth note figures including written divisi in thirds. Many beautiful lines for cello and viola are found in the *Andante Espressivo*, which also has a few high passages for violin, reaching high Gs and As. The *Scherzo* is the most technically challenging movement, with quickly shifting tonalities and high, rapid passages that must be kept at the frog and off the string. Finally, the *March*, reminiscent of toy soldiers or a music box, contains several tricky passages and high notes for the first violins. This charming piece is popular with students!

LEARN MORE ABOUT WIREN



Born in Sweden, Dag Wiren spent most of his life in his native country, though he left to study in Paris for a length of time. His works include symphonies, chamber music, film scores, and television productions. Sparse and transparent writing characterizes much of his work. Wiren's charming *Serenade for Strings* dates from 1937 and is his most delightful and optimistic work, given the forces of war gathering in Europe at the time.

ERMANNNO WOLF-FERRARI

(1876-1948)

SERENADE FOR STRING ORCHESTRA #07658 › GRADE V+ (DIFFICULT)

Written in a very retro-style which summons Rossini with eastern/central European overtones (a motive in the first movement seems to almost quote the Dvořák *Serenade* finale), this *Serenade* does not push compositional boundaries, but rather sums up what has come before-- even trying to get in the “last words”. Rossini and Dvořák never seem to be far away, while Beethoven haunts the finale. These are interesting combinations, but placed in the context of Wolf-Ferrari’s background (German father, Italian mother, and life in Venice--the ultimate cross-roads of culture and commerce!), the overlapping styles and flavors make sense.

The first movement is substantive as well as charming, a real pleasure for the players with its combinations of Italian opera and German symphonic exploration. The excursion takes us through many key areas, mood changes, and considerable development. The *Andante* begins with a simple yet lush theme. Contrasting material provides opportunity for drama, bringing us back to the opening idea now in a minor key and again sounding very Czech. There is more contrast and drama with fast changing tonal landscapes, both of key and major/minor mode. This is a gorgeous movement to perform.

In the *Scherzo*, we are unwittingly dropped headfirst into a Czech furiant. In the opening statement, the listener (and the player!) can be completely fooled by the hemiolas. This calls to mind the *Scherzo* of both Dvořák’s *New World* and *American Quartet*, and other works (Beethoven loved this device, too). The theme sounds SO easy, yet this is a challenging movement for rhythmic reasons. While the notes themselves are not difficult, they can be tricky to feel and group. Working towards realizing the groove in the first and second strains is the goal – looking so easy on paper, yet elusive to master without stumbling. In many ways, this movement provides the greatest challenge of the *Serenade*. The good news is that long segments in the trio are straightforward and easy.

The *Finale* begins with a very academic-sounding fugue-- a fun subject, yet challenging with later fast syncopation. The least “Italianesque” movement, this *Finale* takes the German contrapuntal tradition as its influence, but manages to include humor, making it both invigorating and ingratiating to play. There is no shortage of development in Wolf-Ferrari’s movements – ideas are explored and turned inside out before he is finished with them. Beethoven is clearly enjoying this, himself a fan of “bumper-car” fugues.

Unlike many works for strings, there is great substance and satisfying material in this piece. It is intellectually sustaining as well as fun to play. This is a steak dinner, not a quick fix. The Wolf-Ferrari *Serenade* can be a blockbuster for the right group.

LEARN MORE ABOUT WOLF-FERRARI



There were cutting edge, innovative composers from Italy in the mid-twentieth century, but even they sometimes succumbed to nostalgia and romanticism. Other composers working in Italy were content to look backwards and hold onto lyricism and nineteenth century harmonic language. The Venetian composer Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari is remembered today primarily for several operas and their overtures, as well as a number of chamber works. The *Serenade for String Orchestra* has enjoyed interest over the years and deserves to be explored more often.

PAUL WRANITZKY

(1756-1808)

SYMPHONY IN C MINOR, OP. 31 "LA PAIX" #13743 › GRADE IV+ (ADVANCED)

The Renaissance and Baroque gave us both vocal and later, instrumental "battle" works with special effects, usually from the instruments or voices themselves (ex: Heinrich Biber's *Battalia a 10 for Strings*). These works were clever and entertaining, wonderful examples of early programmatic style.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, immediately following the French Revolution, a number of "Battle Symphonies" were popular, employing elements now described as "French Revolution" music. The finale to Beethoven's *Fidelio*, a "good triumphs over evil" rescue opera, provides an example of French Revolution style: square, military figures, fanfares, a sense of righteousness, trumpets, drums, usually favoring the key of C Major. Beethoven's later Battle Symphony (Wellington's Victory), expands into a sprawling, programmatic event, including gun shots and quoting national themes of the opposing armies. Years later, Tchaikowsky gives us perhaps the most famous work, *1812 Overture*, incorporating cannons and church bells, devices which were popular in other, less celebrated works, now mostly forgotten.

Wranitzky gives us a *Grand Sinfonie caractéristique pour la paix avec la République française* in four movements, each depicting recent French events (the French Revolution and possibly the Anglo-French war). Movement I depicts the Revolution with marches of the English, Austrians and Prussians. Movement II is a funeral march for Louis XVI. Movement III gives us marches of the English and the allies, followed by tumultuous, programmatic battle music, including cannon shots (cued here as bass pizzicato, but available as percussion parts, as well). The final movement portrays peace negotiations and final cries of joy as peace is restored.

Most important to note are the first and second individual viola parts throughout. This could be attributed to French influence, where Lully's Baroque orchestra famously included first and second violas. Vestiges of this practice persist even into the twentieth century with French composers frequently using double stave viola parts.

There are many examples of dotted rhythms and trumpet fanfare figures. We hear much influence of Mozart throughout, recalling *The Magic Flute*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio* finale, and what seem like quotes from finales to *Symphony No. 36* and *41*. All parts are interesting, and while higher passages sometimes occur, these do not last long, nor are they difficult. There are joyous unison passages for the entire orchestra, resulting in a robust effect. The peace negotiations give us a chance to experience four-and-a-half bar phrases! Be ready for lots of linked bowings for the dotted rhythms, a good opportunity to reinforce this technique. There are considerable ornaments, offering a good teaching opportunity.

Wranitzky's "*La Paix*" *Symphony* provides an opportunity to experience French Revolution style through a central European lens, and a classical approach that presses against the dramatic changes coming in the nineteenth century. This very playable work offers unique perspectives, as well as good fun. Paul Wranitzky, living through the life and style changes of both Haydn and Mozart, and experiencing early Beethoven at the composer's elbow, brings a different perspective to our notions of late eighteenth century orchestral music.



LEARN MORE ABOUT WRANITZKY

The Moravian composer Pavel Vranický (later Germanized as Paul Wranitzky, following the custom of many other contemporaries) was admired by Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven. He flourished in the city of Vienna, which, as a cultural Mecca, attracted many musicians of the day seeking opportunities. Wranitzky conducted the premier performance of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 1* and established himself as both conductor and prolific composer.