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the writing; the absence of an overbearing, authoritative tone allows the reader to feel the flexibility necessary in performing these works, free from the perfunctory dogma or religious zealotry as that found in the Cortot or D'Indy's editions.[4]

Since Franck's organ works can be presented succinctly in one edition, this should be in the library of every organist and Franck scholar. Richard Brasier sought to create modern edition that was in line with the composer's intentions while also being a practical, performing edition; in this, he has undoubtedly succeeded.

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Louis Spohr, *String Quartets*, Opp. 29 and 45, ed. Nancy November. *Recent Researches in the Music of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, vol. 85. (Middleton, WI: A–R Editions, 2022). xvi + 423 pp. $500.00

Why would a twenty-first-century publishing house publish the string quartets of a nineteenth-century *Kleinmeister*, and for whom? The A-R Editions website answers these questions as follows: 'Our strength is in bringing forward from the past works by composers who are not as well-known as Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart but who had the talent and drive to make significant contributions to the development of Western music'.[1] Its aim, then, is to rehabilitate composers who have been side-lined by historiography and restore them to their rightful place in the pantheon of music history. Louis Spohr (1784–1859) was a composer who was often presented during his lifetime as a worthy successor to Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, but who is remembered primarily as a violin virtuoso.[2] This alone would justify the undertaking of a modern edition of his works. But the collection 'String Quartets in Beethoven's Europe', which includes the volume under review here, has a different agenda. As Nancy November, editor of both the collection and this volume, writes, this edition provides a 'balanced account of music making in Europe … showing how this supposedly autonomous, canonical genre is deeply rooted in social, cultural, and national contexts; and how this genre complicates the binary opposition of "public" and "private" in musical life … [and] widens the geographical scope of string quartet research' (preface, pp. vii–viii). The purpose here, then, is not to raise monuments to the glory of unjustly forgotten composers – in the manner of the many monumental editions

4 See Cortot César Franck, *Preludio, Corale e Fuga*, 17: 'the interpreter should not only be a musician: it is even more important that he be a believer'. Why Vincent d'Indy robed his teacher César Franck in unashamedly Christian cloaks as a 'Pater Seraphicus', is a much-contested question. The image evoked is one of a caring and gentle religious organist shying away from the limelight, whose unwavering devotion results in his always parting from the organ bench to kneel during consecration – an image which has been burned into the minds of many.

1 See www.areditions.com/who-we-are (accessed 12 July 2023).

2 Clive Brown, 'Louis Spohr', *Grove Music Online* (accessed 12 July 2023).

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that have flourished since the nineteenth century. The aim is rather to support research into chamber music (and the quartet in particular), in the context of the historiographical renewal that has been underway for several decades – a renewal embodied in the work of Nancy November herself, as well as that of Christina Bashford, Louise Bernard de Raymond, Joël-Marie Fauquet, Edward Klorman, Janet M. Levy, Fabio Morabito, Marie Sumner Lott, and Christian Speck, among others.[3] By approaching the string quartet not only through the study of the canonical works, but also through those of the *Kleinmeisters*, as well as the practices and the social and cultural history of the genre, these works have powerfully challenged the historiography of this musical genre. The link between the 'String Quartets in Beethoven's Europe' collection and research is indeed particularly close. Nancy November has surrounded herself with an editorial board made up of scholars who are acknowledged experts in the field of instrumental music of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Allan Badley, Sam Girling, W. Dean Sutcliffe, Mark Ferraguto). The volumes of quartets by Ferdinand Ries, Pierre Rode, Andreas Romberg and Franz Weiss published to date by these scholars, have been used by them as the backbone of the collective work recently published by Nancy November, which bears the same title as this collection.[4]

If there is only one reason to publish Spohr's quartets Opp. 29 (composed between 1813 and 1815 and first published ca. 1815 by Mecchetti in Vienna) and Op. 45 (composed in 1818 and first published in 1819 by Peters in Leipzig), it is that they bust the myth of the 'true quartet' that has long served as a guide to scholarship. In her *Beethoven's Theatrical String Quartets*, Nancy November has masterfully demonstrated how the image of purity and abstraction long associated with the quartet genre is more the result of a theoretical construction by German-speaking authors aimed at forging a national musical identity for a Germany then in search of unity, than of the reality of the works and how they were perceived at the time.[5] This highly idealized vision of the genre pitted the intimate, 'spiritual' works of Haydn, Mozart,

[3] For instance, see Christina Bashford, 'Historiography and Invisible Musics: Domestic Chamber Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 63 (2010): 291–360; Louise Bernard de Raymond, *Les quatuors à cordes 'viennois' et 'parisiens' d'Antoine Reicha: édition critique et étude stylistique* (PhD diss., Sorbonne Université, 2013); Louise Bernard de Raymond, 'En immersion dans la culture du quatuor à cordes du début du XIXe siècle avec Antoine Reicha', *Antonín Rejcha znovunalezený: katalog výstavy / Antoine Reicha redécouvert: catalogue de l'exposition*, ed. Jana Franková et François-Pierre Goy (Brno: Moravská zemská knihovna, 2021), 252–306; Joël-Marie Fauquet, *Les Sociétés de musique de chambre à Paris de la Restauration à 1870,* (Paris: Aux amateurs de livres, 1986); Edward Klorman, *Mozart's Music of Friends: Social Interplay in the Chamber Works* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Janet M. Levy, *The 'Quatuor Concertant' in Paris in the Latter Half of the Eighteenth Century* (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1971); Fabio Morabito, 'Rehearsing the Social: Beethoven's Late Quartets in Paris, 1825–1829', *The Journal of Musicology* 37 (2020): 349–82; Marie Sumner Lott, *The Social Worlds of Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music: Composers, Consumers, Communities* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018); and *The String Quartet from the Private to the Public Sphere*, ed Christian Speck (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016).

[4] Nancy November, ed., *String Quartets in Beethoven's Europe* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2022).

[5] Nancy November, *Beethoven's Theatrical Quartets, Opp. 59, 74 and 95* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). She has continued her work on the quartet genre in the early nineteenth century with two monographs on quartet culture in Beethoven's time: Nancy November, *Cultivating String Quartets in Beethoven's Vienna* (Woodbridge: Boydell

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Beethoven and a few others against the brilliant, light, entertaining *quatuors brillants* and *concertants* that were in vogue on the Paris market, and that showcased the virtuosity of the first violin or the exchange of themes and solos between the four instruments. This rhetoric denouncing the supposed lack of depth of these subcategories, contributed to their exclusion from the musical canon.[6] In the introduction to this edition, November reminds us that the compositions for two violins, viola and cello of this period can only really be understood if they are seen in the social and cultural context in which they were conceived. She refuses to classify Spohr's thirty-six quartets (written between 1804 and 1852), which are of very different types, according to an old typology defined solely by their strictly musical content and supposed interest ('true' quartets *vs*. *quatuors brillants* for virtuosos). Instead, she explains their diversity in terms of how they were intended to serve. Spohr wrote quartets for the amateur domestic practice of the middle class – which must not be too technically demanding but must offer interest in each part. The violinist also composed works for his own use on tour – which, on the contrary, must highlight the virtuosity of the violinist and be easy to sight-read for those who will have to accompany the visiting musician. Finally, he wrote quartets for musical societies made up of connoisseurs and professional musicians – which must highlight the composer's ability to play wittily with his musical material. Drawing on Spohr's autobiography and the musical press of the time, November vividly captures the modes of sociability and the issues at stake in the various occasions for which Spohr composed for the quartet.

This diversity can be explained by the fact that 'Spohr worked in much more varied and less musically privileged circumstances than his slightly older colleague Beethoven' (p. ix). Indeed, unlike Beethoven, who composed his quartets for the court in particularly privileged conditions,[7] Spohr, like so many other composers of the time, had a multifaceted career. Although he also benefited from aristocratic patronage (for example at the court of Duke Carl Wilhelm Ferdinand of Brunswick between 1799 and 1805, or in Kassel from 1821 until his death, for example), he was also a conductor, teacher, author of a violin method, opera director and organizer of his many European tours as a virtuoso violinist.[8] Spohr does not, therefore, fit the myth of the nineteenth-century composer that has long been propagated in historiography – that of the genius entirely absorbed in his art, cut off from the rest of society and devoted to serious high art. On the contrary, he had to deal with many different protagonists (composers, instrumentalists, publishers, patrons, but also anonymous buyers, and so on). This need to 'become a name' in a variety of contexts is reflected in his compositions.[9]

Spohr's quartets Opp. 29 and 45 are remarkable for their ability to evoke, sometimes within the same movement, many other musical genres and, by extension,

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Press, 2017), and *Beethoven's Symphonies arranged for the Chamber, Sociability, Reception, and Canon Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

[6] Michael B. Ward and Fabio Morabito, 'Texture as Structure: Concerto Elements in the String Quartets by Rodolphe Kreutzer, Pierre Rode and Antoine Reicha', in *Antoine Reicha and the Making of the Nineteenth-Century Composer*, ed. Fabio Morabito and Louise Bernard de Raymond (Bologna: Ut Orpheus, 2021): 27.

[7] Tia DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius: Musical Politics in Vienna, 1792–1803* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1995), 60–82.

[8] Brown, 'Louis Spohr'.

[9] Fabio Morabito and Louise Bernard de Raymond, 'The Composer as Process', in *Antoine Reicha and the Making of the Nineteenth-Century Composer*, ed. Fabio Morabito and Louise Bernard de Raymond (Bologna: Ut Orpheus, 2021): XV.

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the contexts of sociability with which they were originally associated. The introduction to the volume, for example, emphasizes the lyrical tendencies of these quartets, demonstrating the porosity of the genre with the vocal world (pp. xi–xii). November links the virtuosity of the first violin part, which is particularly evident in the transitional and variation passages, to the violinist's career, the influence of the French virtuoso Pierre Rode, and also to the emergence of the public chamber music concert at the time. I was also struck by the fact that dance – the waltz in particular – seems to be evoked in several movements of the Op. 45 quartets.[10] The presence of dance is not surprising: at that time it was the most widespread form of social entertainment in all levels of society. Moreover, many composers from Mozart to Chopin, began their training by composing a few bars of a minuet or waltz.[11] What is surprising is that the presence of dance topics in the quartet genre has received so little attention in musicology (while Chopin's mazurkas and waltzes have received a great deal of attention).[12] Dance probably is incompatible with the highly idealized image of the genre that was being constructed at that time. These topics inevitably evoke gestures and movements of the body, as well as the physical pleasure of dancing for the listener and the musicians[13] – especially those of the period – which contrasts with the 'spiritual ideal, which was related to the increasingly disembodied and lofty conception of the string quartet'.[14] The example of waltz topics in Spohr's Op. 45 quartets also invites us to question the opposition between popular, entertainment music and high concert music. The Menuetto of Op. 45 No. 2, for example, combines complex and refined writing techniques, which appeal to the memory and erudition of the connoisseur, with references to the waltz.[15] The Menuetto, in G major, begins with a mischievous motif of four descending fifths played by the first violin. The Trio (bar 59) in E minor, notated *con espress*., is reminiscent of a melancholy waltz. In the last part of the Trio (bars 91–113), as the waltz theme circulates between the first violin, viola and cello, Spohr superimposes the descending fifths motif of the minuet on one or other of the instruments (bars 100–110), until it emerges completely from the texture in preparation for the return of the Menuetto (bars 110–114). The minuet is then completely rewritten by Spohr. The descending fifths motif is used in turn as a theme or accompaniment motif – much like the motif in the first movement of Haydn's Quartet Op. 76 No. 2,

[10] The secondary theme of the first movement of Op. 45 No. 2 is an exemplary expression of the waltz topic (bars 41–84). In addition to the 6/4 time signature and the melody in the first violin part, it is the rhythm of three quarter notes followed by a dotted minim in the cello part that evokes the 6-beat units characteristic of the basic waltz step. See Eric McKee, *Decorum of the Minuet, Delirium of the Waltz. A Study of Dance-Music Relations in ¾ Time* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 12.

[11] McKee, *Decorum of the Minuet*, 3–4.

[12] An exception is the recent paper by Erica Buurman in which she looked at Beethoven's late quartets through this lens, 'Beethoven and the Deutsche: Dance Types and Popular Melodies from the Ritterballett to the Late Quartets', paper delivered at the Internationaler Kongress der Gesellschaft für Musikforschung / International Congress of the Society for Music Research, 28 September 2021.

[13] Erica Buurman, *The Viennese Ballroom in the Age of Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 5.

[14] November, *Beethoven's Theatrical Quartets*, 12.

[15] The accompanying rhythm (minim plus crochet rest in the cello, with quaver rest and five quavers in the second violin and viola parts) is somewhat less characteristic of the waltz topic than in the first movement of Op. 45 No. 2.

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nicknamed 'The Fifths' – and the whole is enlivened by the appearance of ornamental figurations in triplets (bar 122) and then semiquavers (bar 151) on the various parts. Fascinatingly, this movement is reminiscent of Spohr's description in his autobiography of Hummel's improvised waltz at a ball given during the Congress of Vienna.[16] Spohr recounts how the pianist, without ever leaving rhythm of the waltz and without disturbing the dancers, incorporated into his improvisation, themes from works his colleagues had played that evening, as well as ornamental variations on his waltz motifs. This anecdote and Spohr's quartets remind us that serious and light-hearted concerns with music were not mutually exclusive. The presence of such a popular dance as the waltz in a genre traditionally associated with aristocratic intimacy and *Cabinetstück*,[17] refinement could also be seen as a kind of miniature metaphor for the upheavals of the time. The rise of the waltz in the late eighteenth century is associated with social and political revolutions in Europe, the fall of the *Ancien Régime* and the rise of the middle class.[18] These works therefore tell us not only about the formal and aesthetic concerns of their author, but also about the social concerns of their time.[19] This is undoubtedly another excellent reason for publishing these quartets.

In addition to an introduction that clearly places the works in their historical and cultural context, the score of the two quartets is preceded by 'Notes on Performance' and followed by a 'Critical Report' that presents the sources, editorial method and critical apparatus. The 'Notes on Performance' (pp. xiii–xvi) provide modern instrumentalists with the benefit of November's erudition. In particular, she discusses the relationship between the signs in the score, the playing techniques that Spohr associated with them in his method, and how they should be sounded and performed today. Drawing on Clive Brown's indispensable *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice*,[20] she discusses at length the question of detachment in this period of transition in playing techniques and aesthetics. The question of fingering, vibrato and dynamics is also addressed. The score is followed by a critical report which explains the editorial method used with great precision and clarity. The editorial additions are clearly indicated in the score, without making it cumbersome to read. November's editorial decisions are guided by recent research on the quartet. She has chosen not to systematically standardize the notation in parallel passages (simultaneous/repeated textures or passages), because 'what we might now call notational 'inconsistencies' or 'ambiguities' can be understood as part of the performance aesthetic around 1800 … when performance and composition were still considered to be coextensive acts' (p. xiv). This informed

[16] *Louis Spohr's Autobiography, Translated from the German* (London: Longman, Green, Roberts, 1865): 191–2. On the balls held during the Congress of Vienna, see Buurman, *The Viennese Ballroom in the Age of Beethoven*, 148–69.

[17] In the ideology of early nineteenth-century German-speaking writers, the string quartet was associated with the miniature paintings displayed in the cabinets of aristocrats (while the symphony was associated with the painting of panoramas). The metaphor emphasized both the refinement and richness of detail required to write a quartet and a private, elitist listening practice. See Nancy November, 'Theater Piece and *Cabinetstück*: Nineteenth-Century Visual Ideologies of the String Quartet', *Music in Art* 29 (2004): 135–50.

[18] McKee, *Decorum of the Minuet*, 11–12.

[19] Julian Horton, 'Listening to Topics in the Nineteenth Century', in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. Danuta Mirka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 642.

[20] Clive Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750–1900* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002).

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choice thus leaves room for the instrumentalists to construct an interpretation that is not entirely guided by a concern to respect the composer's thought.

However, the presentation of the sources leaves a few questions unanswered (p. 419). This edition is presented as a 'scholarly edition' (Preface, p. vii) which 'aims at reproducing in a clear, modern format the readings of the principal sources, held at the University of Auckland' ('critical report', p. 419). The edition, therefore, does not claim to be a critical one, in which the musicologist collects and compares all the existing sources (sketches, autograph manuscripts, copies, first editions, etc.) to establish variants, filiations and hierarchies, in order to produce a text that does justice to the variability inherent in the history of composition.[21] However, the selection of the 'main sources' among the others is not explained (the existing sources are not listed). The choice of the original Peters edition in separate parts (c. 1819) for Op. 45 is perfectly understandable, but in the case of Op. 29, why resort to a reprint of c. 1828 rather than the original edition? I also wondered why the facsimiles of the autograph manuscripts of the quartets Op. 29 Nos. 1 and 2 published by Clive Brown in 1987[22] had not been consulted in the preparation of this edition. This would have avoided reproducing some of the minor misprints present in the 1828 Haslinger edition. To take one example, in the second movement of Op. 29 No. 1, bar 29, the A-R edition contains a harmonic mark on a D-flat in the first violin part (A string), which would sound very odd in this rapid figuration passage. This sign does indeed appear in the 1828 edition, but it clearly is the result of an error in the engraver's reading of the manuscript.[23] Indeed, if we look at the facsimile of this movement, in which the systems are quite tight, we can see that this mark actually affects the cello part in the upper staff (i.e., bar 24, in which Spohr indicates that the double C-G string of the cello should be played in harmonics). In the 'Notes on the performance' (pp. xv–xvi), the editor uses the example of bar 117 of the first movement of Op. 29 No. 1 to illustrate Spohr's use of dynamics to highlight a part (first violin *dolce*, second violin ***p***, viola and cello ***pp***). In the facsimile of the autograph manuscript, however, the second violin is marked ***pp***, along with the viola and cello. Insofar as such a hierarchy occurs sometimes in other movements, it is possible that Spohr intended a modification of this passage in the 1828 reprint, but it cannot be ruled out that the ***p*** in the second violin part of the 1828 Haslinger edition is an engraver's error. As well as revealing possible engraving errors, the autograph manuscripts contain small differences that raise interesting questions. There are fewer fingering indications in the manuscripts than in the 1828 reprint: were the extra fingerings present in the first edition or were they added for the reprint? Are they by Spohr? Is their function didactic or aesthetic? Was their purpose to make the score easier to sight-read for amateurs or to ensure that the spirit of the composition was not distorted? Consultation of the facsimiles of the autograph manuscripts of these quartets would not have fundamentally altered the content of the present edition, since they do not present any major variants with the early editions chosen, but the

[21] Nicolas Southon, 'Une science des textes musicaux : l'édition critique de partitions. Histoire et principes généraux. Situation de la musique française', *Histoire de la recherche contemporaine* 7/1 (2018): 31–2.

[22] Clive Brown, ed., *Selected Works of Louis Spohr 1784–1859: A Ten-Volume Collection of Facsimiles, Reprints, and New Manuscript Scores*, vol. 9 (New York: Garland, 1988).

[23] The 1828 Haslinger edition can be downloaded from International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP); see https://imslp.org.

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editor's enlightened opinion on these questions would have been invaluable to the reader.

These minor reservations do not prevent us from welcoming this edition of Spohr's quartets Opp. 29 and 45 in score, which is a real source of food for thought on this musical genre in Beethoven's era. This edition, which is also available for sale in two volumes of separate parts on the publisher's website, will be of great benefit to performers who wish to broaden their repertoire or rethink their performance of the canonical repertoire in the light of the experience of performing Spohr's works.

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