

NAXOS

TANEYEV

Complete
String Quartets • 1

String
Quartets
Nos. 1 and 3

Carpe Diem
String Quartet



Sergey Ivanovich Taneyev (1856–1915) String Quartets Nos. 1 and 3

The youngest of three sons, Sergey Taneyev delighted his father Ivan Il'yich, an amateur violinist, pianist, and guitarist, with his precocious musical talent. While Ivan struggled to make his wife and two older sons enjoy the compulsory daily music-making sessions, Sergey was eager to play duets with his father. The only drawback was that his first piano teacher categorically forbade him even to listen to his father's playing, let alone play with him. She was afraid that Ivan Il'yich's haphazard and unmusical approach would have a detrimental effect on Sergey's musical education. Her decision proved to be right, and preserved Taneyev from developing a vehement hatred for music for the rest of his life – the fate that befell his older brother, Vladimir. What is more, Sergey Taneyev became a monumental figure in Russian music of the second half of the nineteenth century, whose significance as a performer, composer, theorist, and a pedagogue is only beginning to be discovered in the West. A pupil of Nikolay Rubinstein and Tchaikovsky, and a teacher of Rachmaninov and Scriabin, Taneyev emerges as a link between these generations that is yet to be properly examined and evaluated.

Taneyev spent most of his creative life in Tchaikovsky's shadow, first as a pupil, and later as a colleague. Tchaikovsky's favourite student, Taneyev gradually became one of his most objective critics and closest

Among Taneyev's works his string quartets are possibly the best demonstration of the composer's style, for this genre presupposes a creative interpretation of a highly conceptualized cyclical form. *Quartet No. 1 in B flat minor, Op. 4*, finished by Taneyev in 1890 (the composer indicated it as No. 5 in his manuscripts), demonstrates Taneyev's ability to construct a solid musical structure from heterogeneous elements. Written in five movements, the piece forms a symmetrical entity. The fast, mobile,

friends, their friendship lasting until Tchaikovsky's death. Taneyev often commented on Tchaikovsky's music, and in many cases his opinion was more important to the older composer than that of any other musician. In turn, Taneyev was grateful for the criticism and advice from his senior colleague. Yet those who expected him to write in the same expansive way as his teacher were disappointed to find a different kind of expressive language, one characterized by noble gravitas and technical solidity.

In fact Taneyev seldom divulged his feelings to his friends and colleagues, and even his diaries are circumspect and concise, but there are a few entries that speak volumes, where he exposes his thoughts for a fleeting moment, and where one can catch a glimpse of a person who was afraid of loneliness and who craved human contact, but who knew only too well that he was doomed to a life of solitude. He believed that his only option was to write more music, and write it in the best way he could. Even there, however, just as in the diaries, he kept the innermost emotions to himself. His music never aimed to impress, everything was written for a reason, and when at rare moments he was unable to contain emotions, we hear the real Taneyev, a private man, but a profound one, with much to give and to share.

Anastasia Belina

and potent first, third, and fifth movements frame the two slow inner movements – the noble and warm second, and the nostalgically alluring fourth. Each movement is also structurally symmetrical. The first movement, sonata-allegro, starts with a slow tempo, monophonically, as if in the middle of a sentence. This openness of the form concludes in the final bar of the movement with the closing of the introductory motive. The arching form shelters a carefully planned series of harmonic progressions,

modulations, and contrapuntal work. Still, Taneyev's talent shines the most through his slow movements. The second movement recalls the introspective fullness of Beethoven and Brahms with Tchaikowskian broken "pathétique" gestures in the middle section. The fourth movement, *Intermezzo*, seduces us with its elegant-yet-banal, moody-yet-dreamy reminiscence of *Dark Eyes*, a popular Russian urban romance.

The shorter, lighter, but also formally balanced, *Quartet No. 3 in D minor, Op. 7*, was completed in 1896 (the earlier version was composed in 1886). In its two movements Taneyev builds a thematic arch between the beginning and

the end. This quartet structurally emphasizes the second movement – a theme with eight variations. The theme – Mozartian graceful lightness-of-being coupled with only hinted sorrowful depths – delights the listener at first, and then, with each variation, takes him on a journey of play and contemplation. In this movement, Taneyev was able to successfully combine his refined craftsmanship and theoretical knowledge with a true abundance of creative ideas – melodic, harmonic, polyphonic, and timbral.

Dina Lentsner

Carpe Diem String Quartet

The Carpe Diem String Quartet, in residence at the Conservatory of Music at Capital University, has earned critical acclaim as a leading chamber ensemble with a diverse repertoire and passion for audience engagement. Carpe Diem champions music of living composers with a balance of the classics while uncovering overlooked treasures of the chamber music repertoire. Through innovative programming, including traditional presentations of the standard repertoire, thematic concerts, and popular music for younger generations, Carpe Diem brings new audiences into the concert hall and revitalizes the chamber music recital. Featured quartet of the 2007 Contemporary Music Festival at the Ohio State University, Carpe Diem has presented premières by Donald Harris, Kenneth Fuchs, Osvaldo Golijov, Andre Hajdu, Jonathan Leshnoff, Nicholas Maw, Clancy Newman, Carter Pann, Eric Sawyer, and Gunther Schuller, among others. www.carpediemstringquartet.com

Charles Wetherbee

Charles Wetherbee studied at the Curtis Institute of Music with Aaron Rosand. He has performed throughout the world as a soloist and chamber musician. He is the Artistic Director of the Marble Cliff Chamber Players, the Snake River Music Festival, and also a founding member of the piano trio Opus 3. He has appeared with such conductors as Semyon Bychkov, Enrique Diemecke, JoAnn Falletta, Junichi Hirokami, Krzysztof Penderecki, and Mstislav Rostropovitch. In 1990 he travelled to the Middle East to perform for the men and women of the Armed Services.

Robert Firdman

Robert Firdman studied at the Eastman School of Music with Charles Castleman and Donald Weilerstein, and continued his studies under a National Endowment for the Arts grant. He has an extensive background in chamber music, including membership in the Dublin Chamber Music Society, ensemble Camerata, and the Marble Cliff Chamber Players. He has taught the violin at Otterbein University, Kenyan College, and Ohio Wesleyan University, and coached at the Chamber Music Connection, Worthington, Ohio. He has performed in Europe and the United States, and been invited to festivals in Spoleto, Italy, New College (Sarasota), and the Yale Summer School of Music.

Korine Fujiwara

Korine Fujiwara holds degrees from the Juilliard School and Northwestern University, where she studied with Joseph Fuchs and Myron Kartman. Described by critics as “engaging” and “with finesse and perfection,” she is Instructor of Violin and Viola at Ohio Wesleyan University and member of the Duvall Trio. She has been invited to numerous festivals, including Aspen Music Festival, Focus! Festival, Olympic Music Festival, Snake River Chamber Players, Summergarden Festival, and the Victoria International Festival. She was an Artist/Teacher-in-residence in Reykjavik, Iceland, and received the Hjalmer and Emma Kivekas Award, the Raymond Cerf Memorial Scholarship, and the Fetzer Prize for outstanding performance.

Wendy Morton

Cellist Wendy Morton studied at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia with Orlando Cole, and with Lawrence Lesser at the New England Conservatory. She has performed with the Santa Fe Opera orchestra, the Honolulu Symphony, the Pennsylvania Ballet and Opera Orchestras, and the Symphony Orchestra of the Curtis Institute of Music. She is on the faculty of Ohio Wesleyan University and a member of the Duvall Trio, and has performed with the Bay Chamber Concerts, the Brandenburg Ensemble, the Harvard Chamber Orchestra, the Inverness Festival Orchestra, the Pushkin Ensemble, Quattro Corde, the Spoleto Festival, and the Telluride Chamber Players.



From left to right:
Korine Fujiwara
Charles Wetherbee
Robert Firdman
Wendy Morton
Photo by
Karina Wetherbee



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Playing Time
61:39Made in Canada
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Booklet notes in English

A pupil of Tchaikovsky, whom he replaced at the Moscow Conservatory, Sergey Taneyev was a virtuoso pianist and a teacher of Scriabin and Rachmaninov. Although as a composer Taneyev is best known today for his four symphonies, he also composed a sizeable body of chamber music, including six String Quartets. These beautifully crafted works are marked by technical assurance at every turn, as well as dramatic inspiration and intense lyricism. The masterly five-movement *Quartet No. 1*, in fact Taneyev's Fifth, includes two notable slow movements, while the lighter *Quartet No. 3* features a graceful theme with eight variations, alternately playful and contemplative.

Sergey Ivanovich
TANEYEV
(1856–1915)

Complete String Quartets • 1

	String Quartet No. 1 in B flat minor, Op. 4	34:29
1	Andante espressivo	9:51
2	Largo	8:14
3	Presto	3:51
4	Intermezzo: Andantino – Largamente	6:16
5	Finale: Vivace e giocoso	5:58
	String Quartet No. 3 in D minor, Op. 7	26:54
6	Allegro	9:19
7	Theme and Variations: Andantino grazioso	17:33

Carpe Diem String Quartet

Charles Wetherbee, First Violin • Robert Firdman, Second Violin
Korine Fujiwara, Viola • Wendy Morton, Cello

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