

THE CHAMBER MUSIC OF LOUIS SPOHR

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This is a revised and expanded version of a study which first appeared in the Chamber Music Journal of The Cobbett Association (based in the United States) and we thank them for their kind permission to reproduce that material. Dr Jacobs has played through every one of Spohr's string chamber works and he says that his essay is from the viewpoint of a player rather than a musicologist.

NO description of Spohr's chamber music can be undertaken without recognising his enormously important role in the evolution of violin playing and his fame as a composer of orchestral, choral and instrumental music. His career as performer, conductor and composer went from 1802 to 1858. In some quarters, during this time, his popularity rivalled, and even exceeded that of Beethoven. Many contemporary accounts describe his personal integrity and a liberal political consciousness. At the same time his distinction as a violinist, starting at an early age, was such that his unique style of playing and noble, singing tone stirred audiences all over Europe. He left us a very informative and entertaining autobiography. In addition to his "Violin School" which was written for teachers, students and amateurs, he invented and made popular the chin rest, the baton and the use of rehearsal letters. We have a remarkable legacy with his chamber music because his own fingerings, bowings and dynamics in the manuscripts appear in the early editions of his works and this helps us to interpret his style.

We are obliged to understand why so much of his music has fallen into obscurity. As a result of this decline, relatively few of his string quartets, quintets, piano trios etc are in print or available. Concert performances, except for chamber music with wind, are unusual. I have never witnessed a single public performance of a string quartet or string quintet by Spohr.

In order to help us to understand why so little of his chamber music appears in concert programmes today we can start by examining the account of Spohr's chamber music in Cobbett's Cyclopaedia. Harvey Grace writes: "The standard of writing string quartets, set once and for all by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, remains the most exacting in music. It is commonly said that Spohr's failure to hold his ground in this test is due to his tendency to look back to the earlier days of the form when a string quartet was little more than a violin solo with a slight string accompaniment."

Having participated in playing all 36 quartets, seven string quintets (with two violas), four double quartets, string sextet and 14 duos for two violins, I find this criticism is unduly harsh and often totally inaccurate. Perhaps Mr Grace, an editor of organ works and author of books about the organ and church music, was not the best choice for the entry on Spohr's chamber music. He was probably more familiar with Spohr's considerable output of church music (four oratorios and many works for chorus, voice and orchestra).

Cobbett himself goes on, in his footnote to Grace's entry, to recommend the two quartets of op.4 (written in his formative years), op.45 no.2 and op.74 nos 1, 2 and 3, and describes the immense popularity of Lady Halle's performances of the *quatuor brillant* op.93.

The view that Spohr's virtuosity as a violinist influenced his quartet writing is perpetuated, of course, by the format of the *quatuor brillant*. There are six of these and the first violin does predominate in some of the other quartets. There is a history to the *quatuor brillant* that goes back to violinist-composers before Spohr, e.g. Rode. Spohr's use for this format is described by Clive Brown who has written a very sensitive and historically well-grounded biography of Spohr. Spohr played the quartets of his contemporaries at private parties and in public. He is known to have championed Beethoven's op.18 (as well as the Ninth Symphony) although he had reservations about the late quartets. J. F. Rochlitz (1769-1842), foremost music critic and editor at that time, wrote: "He is altogether a different person when he is playing for example Beethoven (his darling whom he handles exquisitely) or Mozart (his ideal) or Rode, whose grandiosity he knows so well how to assume ... or when he plays Viotti and galant composers. He is a different person

because they are different persons.” This characteristic is, arguably, rare in today’s world of violin playing. Since Spohr was thoroughly familiar with the music of his contemporaries and their quartets, we should pay closer attention to his own chamber music. His astonishingly versatile creative output shows that he was hardly a prisoner of his violin virtuosity, unlike many other virtuosi composers of the 19th century. I would like to make several other comments from my personal experience playing the chamber music of this imposing figure – who, by the way, was well over six feet tall! Although Harvey Grace writes “there are many beautiful movements scattered about among his numerous compositions” there are also many that are inspired from beginning to end, including at least ten quartets, four string quintets, the sextet and all four double quartets.

I had never heard these works and first came to know them by playing them. This experience reminded me of the days when some quartets of Haydn were rarely played in homes and never heard in performances and recordings. At that time I systematically went through them all in a chronologically ordered edition, which was an amazing year of discovery. Spohr on the other hand had various publishers for his quartets and unlike the case of Haydn there is no complete edition by one publisher.

A brief description of the quartets follows:

Op. 4, nos 1/2. These quartets, his first, written in 1804-05 at the age of 21, were published by Kühnel, himself a quartet player, who kept them although Spohr was dissatisfied soon after he completed them. In spite of that, they were published by various other publishers and underwent many transcriptions as was so common with all of his chamber music as his fame spread. One can detect the influence of Beethoven’s op.18 (published 1801) e.g. in the *Adagio* of no.1 (sopra una corda) or the *Rondo vivace* of no.2. It is hard to see evidence of his individuality in these works.

Op.11, the first *quatuor brillant*, appeared not too long after – “in the style of Rode” and immediately showed (at least to amateurs) the faults of the format. The first violin part compares in virtuosity to the Concerto no.4 (op.10). Even the *Adagio* would be too formidable for house playing by amateurs and the other parts are uninteresting.

Op.15, nos 1/2. We come here to the first set to appear in modern edition (Bärenreiter). The style is still not fully developed but all parts are eminently readable. The final movement of no.2 presents an exciting fugue. Very well balanced as quartets.

Op.27. Some four years later and very characteristic Spohr. Dedicated to the famous Count Rasumovsky whom Spohr had met in Vienna through his friendship with Beethoven’s violinist Schuppanzigh. A type of “solo quartet” with less participation by the other three instruments. Most memorable is the Minuet movement with its gracious trio, harmonics, leisurely pace and wide range of dynamics. Spohr’s “Rasumovsky Quartet” is very melodic but with a difficult first violin part in the first movement. Very rewarding to play.

Op.29, nos 1/3. In this set, dedicated to his friend the famous violinist Andreas Romberg, the classical quartet form is finally fully developed. The cello parts tend to be more prominent than previously. The first quartet appears in a modern edition (Bärenreiter). These works and others commissioned by Johann Tost (cf. Haydn’s “Tost Quartets”) were lauded by contemporary critics. One of them Fröhlich, felt that Spohr had “rediscovered the trail of Mozart’s genius” and that the second quartet was “one of the most significant works that music has in this format”. The first quartet shows harmonic advances (e.g. first movement bars 92-120) ahead of their time and there is a charming theme and variations for the *Andante*. The Scherzo has a trio which is replete with Spohr’s now famous up-bow staccato. The second quartet shows the first appearance of a very moving and typical “Spohr adagio” and the third has an even more florid *Adagio* with a very colourful Scherzo reminiscent of a peasant dance.

We now come to **op.30** where one senses an entrance into a different world, more programmatic and romantic. A strongly optimistic tone comes to the fore immediately in the first movement. Although the first violin has a facile display the other players are integrated into the narrative flow. The effect, when all the players follow the designated dynamics scrupulously, is superb. The *Adagio* is truly sublime, with ornate embellishments from the first violin, finally ending in an elegiac and resigned mood. The dramatic Minuet contains a trio which evokes the sounds of a duo of hunting horns and in fact this leads into a truly remarkable last movement *Vivace*. The preamble of the “horns” assembling the riders in the distance is

followed by what sounds for all the world like galloping horses. I have taken to calling this piece Spohr's "Hunt" quartet. The imagery is further enhanced by Spohr himself calling it his "Paradepferd" (parade horse) because he was asked to play this quartet so often at private parties.

Next follows **op.43**, a *quatuor brillant*, perhaps not so difficult to read as some of the other "brillants". The cheerful mood may reflect his trip to Rome where it was written. The quartet for the first time uses metronome markings with a method which is no longer in use. This work might be one recommended for reading, with the usual proviso of the "brillant" genre, because of its melodic content, particularly in the last movement.

The three quartets of **op.45** were actually conceived with amateurs in mind; Spohr wrote this to the publisher (Peters) and in fact they achieved wide popularity, especially the second quartet. In the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* of January 1819 (as extracted by Clive Brown) was a report that would have caught the attention of readers: "Spohr played quartets by Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Spohr, Fesca and Onslow in the weekly quartet meetings. Three new magnificent quartets by Spohr received great applause. They shall soon be published by Peters of Leipzig." The first has an *Andante* reminiscent of Schubert and a last movement of "alpine" nature – a characteristic that appears occasionally in some later chamber works.

Op.45/2 is a more interesting work and I think can serve throughout as a clearly inspired and typical Spohr quartet that is one of the most memorable. The first movement immediately launches into an assertive and engaging melody and the second subject is even more endearing. The *Larghetto* that follows, sombre as it is, reminds one of a plaintive dirge in stately 2/4 time, soon joined with an interesting accompanying theme in 12/16. The interplay between the voices is fascinating and has an unforgettable effect, particularly if dynamics are followed carefully. A courtly Minuet with complementary trio follows. Then a sudden forte chord introduces a dance-like finale with exciting forward movement and development – the different instruments answering each other and again employing the celebrated Spohr staccato.

Op.45/3 is not so successful and suffers in comparison to the first two. An interesting piece of history as described in Spohr's autobiography is his story of Cherubini asking to hear the first two quartets three times over and declaring the slow movement of no.2 "the most beautiful of all that he had heard". He was also taken with the fugal last movement of no.1.

The three quartets of **op.58** appeared several years later when Spohr, now in Dresden, was in closer association with Weber and was thereby stimulated to complete his later very successful opera *Jessonda*. In Dresden he had very successful chamber music parties regularly at his home. **Op.58/1** appears in modern edition (Hans Schneider) though Spohr's original indications have not always been followed exactly. The gracious first movement is followed by an *Adagio* which has a religious aura somewhat reminiscent of Handel. The Scherzo is intriguing in its architecture with a lovely slower trio, and the final Rondo has a bracing interplay between all four instruments. **Op.58/2** is perhaps the most consistently successful of the three. The opening theme of the *Moderato* first movement, of typical Spohr elegance, is taken over by the cello, leading to the second theme, one of surpassing beauty. The *Andante con Variazioni* presents a theme in 4/4 which is reworked in a very clever way in the next movement, a Scherzo *Vivace* in 3/4 time. The last movement, *Rondo All'Espagnola*, never fails to excite both players and listeners because of its exotic rhythms (think of a bolero with castanets!). A gipsy style phrase high up on the G string punctuates the sections. This marvellous quartet has high interest for all players. **Op.58/3** is not as spectacular. It is interesting how once more it is the second theme of the first movement that is hauntingly beautiful, anticipating the "nightingale" theme of the first movement of op.93. The Minuet in 3/4 time has occasional 2/4 bars interwoven, a device increasingly used by Spohr alone during this period.

A comparison of two more *quatuors brillants*, **op.61** of 1819, and **op.68** of 1823, leaves one preferring the latter because of somewhat greater prominence of the other three parts. Another advantage of op.68 is its *Larghetto* with "sopra una corda" which reminds one of a Scottish ballad. The Rondo is spectacular – if the first fiddle part can be mastered! It is like a panorama of ongoing scenes described by a country fiddler! Among the *brillant* quartets this one is highly recommended.

We come now to the three quartets of **op.74** and each in its entirety is Spohr at his best. Both Wilhelm Altmann and W. W. Cobbett agree. No.2 and 3 appear in modern edition (Hans Schneider). Spohr was finally established in Kassel, the city which now houses his archives. Already in the dramatic opening

chords of **op.74/1** the cello and viola announce new prominence. The drama and architecture of this movement has orchestral proportions. After the *Larghetto*, a Scherzo of exceptional dramatic quality ranges in a propulsive way between *pp* and *ff*. The trio flows along in pianissimo punctuated by cello pizzicato. The final Rondo is less inspired and overdeveloped but again comes to life if Spohr's dynamics are followed.

The second quartet is from beginning to end a masterpiece. The first movement is charming. The famous *Larghetto* is pensive and resigned and leading into a more affirmative middle section and then a return to resignation. An *Allegretto con Variazioni* is put together in a strikingly clever way and the finale races along with the various voices playing tag with each other.

With the third quartet we have an equally great masterpiece. The *Allegro*, all in 3/2 time, consists of sweeping themes. The *Adagio* is very dramatic. The Scherzo, in 3/4 time, races along also in high drama but in a relaxed trio the beat is extended to 6/4. The finale, *Presto*, is of exceptional interest. It reaches a level of contrapuntal complexity rare in the classical quartet. This never fails to thrill the players and listeners. One wonders if Spohr was inspired by the unusual second movement *Allegro* of Haydn's op.55/2. If so he extended the drama even further, using a theme like a Rossini aria with operatic touches. At the end it all finishes in quiet murmurs. Once played, you will never forget it.

Two years later the three quartets of **op.82** appeared, the best of these being no.3. The first quartet seems to lack inspiration in the outer movements. However the *Andantino* is extremely effective – with a pastorale-like quality, and very touching. Again, strict attention to Spohr's designated dynamics is essential to create the proper effect. The reply to the theme is played higher on the string with interesting parts for the other strings. The Scherzo and its trio have the familiar Spohr elan.

The second quartet boasts a beautiful *Adagio* and a third movement, *Alla Polacca*, a form that Spohr was favouring. The cello part in these is prominent.

Op.82/3 has a stately first movement which is followed by a really unusual *Andante*. In this there are 4/8 and 3/8 bars which alternate in somewhat unpredictable ways. This seems an unprecedented invention of varied rhythm and metre which is otherwise in a totally classical form. The players usually find this a delight, but it is rare that all four play it through without some confusion! Glenewinkel describes an overall periodicity of 28 eighth notes but we find the middle section and the coda depart from this pattern. Spohr allows some free verse into the metre. The Scherzo that follows moves lightly and gracefully, the cello supplying impressive support. The last movement is perhaps less striking but the work remains in one's memory because of the unique and intriguing rhythms of the *Andante* and an impressive Scherzo, particularly if one observes *pps* and *ffs* designated by Spohr in the Scherzo.

The *quatuor brillant op.83* (1829) requires much facility for the solo violin (many passages in thirds and tenths) and the other parts merely accompany, totally unlike the traditional quartet. However, if all can get past the first movement, a highly embellished *Adagio* and *Alla Polacca* await. It was around this time that Spohr wrote one of his most successful operas, *The Alchemist* (1830) which featured exotic passages scored with castanets and tambourines, lending Spanish and even gipsy colouring. Also at this time his widely utilised and famous "Violin School" appeared in print. In it, incidentally, he makes recommendations on the execution of a "regular" quartet – that it should display the ideas of the composer rather than the talent of the violinist.

In this time frame the three quartets of **op.84** were written and again with no. 3 we come to a work that attains a new level of success. The first quartet contains a contemplative *Larghetto* with a superb cello part. The second quartet does not have a highly inspired first movement but the *Adagio* and Scherzo are successful and the Rondo shows an engaging and extended complexity requiring a skilful first violin and contributions from the other instruments as an integral part of the composition.

I personally found **op.84/3** a very distinguished quartet. It starts with considerable drama and a beautifully constructed first movement. The Minuet is a unique production which uses natural harmonics in a lilting way. The trio provides brilliant runs and extended stretches of Spohr's up-bow staccato. The *Adagio*, the crowning glory of the quartet, declaims a sombre theme in ensemble with the others. This then develops into a very expressive second theme with chromatic runs and double stops – resulting in a slow movement of unforgettable beauty. The finale is a rollicking and elegant *Allegretto*, to be played not too fast and again employing natural harmonics.

At this point we come to **op.93** *quatuor brillant* and are reminded of Cobbett's anecdotal comments appended to Harvey Grace's entry on Spohr in the Cobbett Cyclopaedia. Cobbett describes Lady Halle leading this solo quartet a dozen times at the Popular Concerts in London, obviously a very successful work and prompts one to try this *quatuor brillant* before doing the others. The other parts are not entirely without interest and also use Spohr staccato. An *Andante* introduction leads into a highly lyrical and cheerful theme with first violin passages that are of relatively moderate difficulty. The second theme is an interesting comparison to the first, more intense and earnest and yet still as lyrical as a nightingale's song. The *Larghetto* and Rondo can be read without much difficulty.

The next quartet, **op.132**, had the honour of being played in Mendelssohn's house (1846) with Wagner present. It was Spohr's only meeting with Wagner. The *Adagio* and Scherzo are notable, the trio of the Scherzo being especially charming.

Op.141 is superior to op.132. A very well-written first movement goes to an inspired *Larghetto*. The Scherzo shows the Spanish bolero type rhythm with great success and the *Presto* finale moves along with all parts well developed. This quartet, as successful as it is, is surpassed by the next, **op.146**. I consider op.146 the best of the "late" quartets – a category which of course is not to be compared to the Beethoven classification. The most impressive of the movements here is the *Adagio molto*. The theme is written for the violin G string and it is a most noble Spohr adagio. There is sudden dramatic punctuation with double stops in tenths. The very light Scherzo in *Presto* is a welcome foil. The last movement also shows no weakness.

Op.152 is entertaining throughout. Interesting parts for all instruments including second violin and viola but in general not as successful as op.146.

The last two quartets **opp.155** and **157**, remain in manuscript, which has been microfilmed and photocopied. The former is certainly worthy of playing. It has a *Romanza Andantino* and the Minuet and last movement are clearly better than op.157. This last quartet seems to lack inspiration, although the *Larghetto* is very nice.

The seven viola quintets are hardly ever played – I have never heard a public performance of these either. In general the two violas enrich the harmonisation in these works although the first viola does get to play some important solos, often in response to an initial statement by the first violin. The other instruments should have no complaints concerning their importance, since they too are required to execute prominent passages, sometimes quite unexpectedly. The first two quintets are **op.33 nos 1 and 2** and no.2 is the earlier work (publisher's error) and more interesting than no.1. It received full recognition when it appeared and belongs to the same period as the highly inspired op.30 string quartet. As with all the quintets, the first violin part is never as demanding, technically, as in the "brilliant" quartets. For that reason there is even less justification for their neglect. The first movement is beautifully written in a flowing style. The Scherzo is very original, with daring leaps, and the trio is a model of gracious tranquillity. In the theme and variations of the *Andante* all instruments play important roles. Compared to this quintet, op.33/1 has a significantly more soloistic first violin part.

The third quintet **op.69**, is adorned by its last movement rondo, which is in fact a barcarole, with the cello describing the gondola's motion. The first movement of the fourth quintet, **op.91**, has such intonation difficulties because of chromaticism in all parts that it might deter further reading of this piece. Similarly the *Larghetto*, with all its charm, has a chromatic section in D \flat major. The mazurka-like Minuet is a study in contrast between forte and piano phrases, with Spohr's instructions to start "pousse" (up-bow) for piano and "tire" (down-bow) for forte. The trio section (marked *Scherzo Presto*) is a quiet, gliding waltz. Both dances reappear in the lengthy coda – entrancing mood swings ending with morendo. Spohr indicates an unusually large number of fingerings in the first edition which should be observed because of their special effects on sound and phrasing.

The fifth quintet, **op.106**, is in my opinion the best of them all. Altmann says that this work should be the friend of every chamber music player. The first movement proceeds in a dramatic and declamatory manner, in a stately tempo with rich sonorities, and a stirring conclusion. Both players and listeners are immediately engaged. The *Larghetto* is full of sentiment. The drama of the forceful Scherzo is heightened by several stretches of 2/4 bars. At the end a short bridge in harmonics is linked to continuing harmonics throughout the *Finale Pastorale*, which is a highly witty and original movement.

The most notable movement in the sixth quintet, **op.129**, is the Scherzo (6/8) which has numerous passages in *pp* with up-bow Spohr staccato played together by first and second violins and first viola, always preceded by explosive *fz* chords. Trios 1 and 2 are in 4/4 time and have the same melody as each other but starting in two different keys. The last movement is a whirlwind *Presto* with a melodic second theme.

The final quintet, **op.144**, is a formidable work. One immediately notices the “*bebung*” marking over certain notes. This is to indicate a rocking motion of the single finger on that note, showing that Spohr was probably more restrained, in comparison with the frequent wall-to-wall vibrato of today! Incidentally, the same wavy line over a note is sometimes seen in old editions of Boccherini’s chamber music. There is very thick writing in the noble *Larghetto*. The Minuet has a very sad mood which one does not easily forget. On the other hand, Spohr creates a more easy-going atmosphere in the finale by writing it in G major instead of the main key of G minor and, as in *op.69*, the *barcarole* tempo. This unusual piece – one of his last works – has elicited much enthusiasm among players.

The sextet, a lyrical and exuberant work, is being played with increasing frequency. It is surprisingly youthful in spirit considering that it is a late work (**op.140**). Spohr commented when he wrote it that his spirits were raised by the current events concerning the unification of Germany and the people’s freedom movement. His liberal views were well-known. Clive Brown in his biography describes at length Spohr’s writings about this.

Altmann characterised the sextet (one of his most significant works) as a piece that every friend of chamber music must know. Boccherini’s set of six and Pleyel’s *Sestetto Concertant* seem to be the only important predecessors. Brahms wrote his *op.18* only 11 years later. The piece opens with the first viola singing the theme and the first violin takes up the second subject. Both melodies are so inspired that they leave an indelible memory. The *Larghetto* has the dramatic expression of a poem. The Scherzo has an elfin-like wistfulness and leads into an exciting *Presto*, where the Scherzo reappears several times before the ending in *prestissimo*.

We come now to the unusual format that seems unique for Spohr. He wrote that the idea of the double quartet came to him from Andreas Romberg, to whom he had dedicated the *op.29* quartets some years before. The concept of a duo for two groups is one that he used for the seventh symphony and some choral works. When people congregate in the living room to play the double quartets the seating arrangement can be problematic. Obviously the usual octet seating is not optimal. To this end we have Sir George Smart to come to the rescue. He describes in a visit to Spohr’s house in Kassel in 1825 what must have been an early reading of the first double quartet, which Spohr, his host, had organised. The two first violins need to be in constant contact with each other and their respective quartets around them. Sir George describes the actual seating plan and the place for the audience.

The first double quartet, **op.65**, was immediately successful and the piece has remained in print ever since. There were various arrangements made, one of them for string quartet! The first double quartet was recorded by Heifetz years ago and left many music lovers with the impression that it was the only one. The opening theme is played in unison by both Quartetto I and II. In general, Quartetto II plays a subsidiary role. In the later double quartets, the Quartetto II is more prominent. The character of the music changes significantly with the three later double quartets. The second, **op.77**, has a Minuet that has dramatic interplay between the two quartets. In the *Larghetto* there are sections with syncopated 32nd notes which pose a formidable difficulty, especially when reading. The final *Allegretto* has a very crisp rhythm with interesting interplay between the two groups and can be read easily.

The third double quartet, **op.87**, was a favourite of Joachim who played it in London with Spohr himself and often programmed it thereafter. An *Adagio* introduction is quite intriguing and the *Allegro* starts right in with a sweeping melody. Accidentals abound in all parts. The *Andante* with variations is especially interesting owing to the eight voices. The Scherzo makes much of the interplay between the two quartets, as does the last movement.

The fourth double quartet, **op.136**, is, in my opinion, the most inspired of them all. The two violas set a melancholy mood which is offset by the syncopated second theme, stated by one quartet and answered by the other with a climbing arpeggio, and then these roles are reversed. The writing and interplay of all parts is fascinating. In the *Larghetto*, which is truly sublime, the dialogue continues, punctuated by descending

two-note pizzicatos, one instrument at a time. The final measures depict solemn resignation and I know of no section in Spohr's chamber music that is so moving. The Scherzo is unique, with forte triplet scales in contrary motion and long stretches of up-bow staccato. The triumphant finale, a brisk *Vivace*, has two time signatures – 2/2 for the first theme and 6/4 for the second but the beat remains the same which is obvious when the time signatures sometimes differ. The last section switches to major mode.

When two quartets are assembled to play the Mendelssohn octet, the opportunity to do Spohr double quartets, particularly the later ones, should not be missed.

Spohr's 14 duos for two violins should occupy a special place in the repertory. They were composed over the time of his entire career, starting with **op.3** in 1802 during his trip to Russia with Franz Eck, his violin teacher, and ending with **op.153** (1855). The three **op.39** duos were written in 1816, the same year as the very famous violin concerto no.8, the "Gesangszene" and they show much sophistication. One might start by considering the *Adagio* and *Presto* of **op.39/1**. The *Adagio* is poignantly beautiful and the *Presto* brilliantly written for both violins. **Op.39** nos 2 and 3 have movements where both violins play double stops continuously, creating a rich texture. The next set, **op.67**, is perhaps the best of the lot. The American violinist, Isaac Stern, featured **op.67/2** with its elegant rondo in concert with the then young violinist Pinchas Zuckerman. **Opp.148, 150 and 153** are three late duos that are masterfully written and could be done as grand concert pieces. In fact they are dedicated to Alfred and Henry Holmes, the two English brothers who were already known as violin duo performers.

We plan a future description of chamber music with piano and a few early works for solo violin and strings (potpourris et al). In the meantime we suggest a trip to Germany on the officially named Louis Spohr express train No. ICE 798 (with dining car) which can be started at Munich. It goes through Kassel and Braunschweig (Brunswick), the two most important cities in Spohr's life.