

# Ferdinand THIERIOT

## CHAMBER MUSIC, VOLUME TWO

QUINTET IN G MAJOR FOR TWO VIOLINS, VIOLA AND TWO CELLOS

FOUR FANTASY PIECES FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO, OP. 28

2 ADAGIOS FOR VIOLA AND ORGAN, OP. 41

LARGHETTO FOR VIOLA AND ORGAN

SUITE FOR THREE CELLOS

Hamburg Chamber Players

# FERDINAND THIERIOT: CHAMBER MUSIC, VOLUME TWO

by William Melton

Born in Hamburg on 7 April 1838, Ferdinand Heinrich Thieriot was the son of Heinrich Theodor Thieriot, a successful businessman, and the Danish-born Johanna Maria Elisa, *née* Eggeling. Biographical treatments of the composer have been woefully thin, one scholar concluding that lexicon ‘entries are extremely short and very similar to one another; Thieriot’s biography usually consists only of a few dates of his life, without individual aspects being examined in more detail.’<sup>1</sup> Ferdinand’s paternal grandfather was long identified as Paul Emil Thieriot (1780–1831), a philologist and violinist who was a friend and correspondent of the early Romantic scribe Jean Paul. Recently the organist-scholar Walter Zielke has verified that Jacob Heinrich Thieriot (1778–1849) – silk-importer, Reformed Church stalwart and royal Saxon privy councillor – was the grandsire of the composer; Paul Emil was a great-uncle.<sup>2</sup>

Ferdinand, whose Huguenot forebears had landed in Germany just after 1700,<sup>3</sup> took piano and composition lessons with Eduard Marxsen in the neighbouring town of Altona. The latter had studied in Vienna with Ignaz von Seyfried and Simon Sechter, imbibing what music of Beethoven and Schubert the 1830 season

<sup>1</sup> Mathias Keitel, *Der Nachlass Ferdinand Thieriot in der Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky*, Hausarbeit zur Diplomprüfung, Fachhochschule Hamburg, Hamburg, 2000, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Die Welt des Ferdinand Thieriot’, foreword to Ferdinand Thieriot, 5. *Symphonie Cis-Moll*, AlbiMusic, Brunsbüttel, 2014, p. IX. Walter Zielke’s research has furnished future biographers with many invaluable details of Thierot’s life, and he has shepherded many of the composer’s manuscripts into print.

<sup>3</sup> Cited in ‘Stadt Leipzig Strassenbenennung 1/2016’ (<https://www.l-iz.de/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/vi-ds-02224-anlage1.pdf>). In this public document, the Thieriotics, described as ‘a widely settled Leipzig family of merchants and musicians’, were honoured by the renaming of the 200-metre-long Thieriotstrasse.

had to offer, and afterwards inculcated his reverence for Bach, Mozart and Haydn into his own pupils. Ferdinand, to whom Marxsen gave the same careful baptism in the classics that Johannes Brahms had received five years earlier, also became an accomplished cellist under the tutelage of Louis Lee (the younger brother of Sebastian Lee, the solo cellist of the Paris Grand Opéra). At the beginning of the 1850s, ‘Thieriot’s creative enthusiasm and constant diligence had already come to the fore so early that the instrumental technique which had already brought forth rich fruit was forced to take a back seat. The creative, rather than the re-creative talent immediately came into its own.’<sup>4</sup> The young man further refined his cello technique with the Hamburg-born August Prell and Friedrich August Kummer of Dresden. In the latter city Ferdinand’s compositional skills benefited from consultation with Carl Gottlieb Reissiger, then he turned to the eminent contrapuntist Joseph Rheinberger in Munich, and finally a valedictory visit was made to Giacomo Meyerbeer in Paris. The end of his studies brought a magnificent gift from his father: a cello crafted by Domenico Montagnana in 1735 that had originally been acquired by his grandfather.<sup>5</sup> Ferdinand soon used the cello in aid of his elder Hamburg acquaintance Johannes Brahms, playing performances of the latter’s Piano Quartet, Op. 25, and the Cello Sonata, Op. 38, in Zurich in 1865–66. A quick succession of teaching and performing posts followed: in Hamburg, at the theatre in Ansbach, in Leipzig in 1867, and as director of the Singakademie in Glogau (now Głogów) in Silesia in 1868. The year 1869 saw Thieriot’s marriage to Johanna Catharina Friederike Carins, and the publication of the symphonic fantasy *Loch Lomond*, Op. 13, which became one of his best-known works:

The present piece enjoyed a very public and distinguished success during the Altenburger Tonkünstler-Versammlung. [...] We can add to this report that both the arrangement and the instrumentation contain much that is original and effective, that the hearer’s interest in

<sup>4</sup> Emil Krause, ‘Zu Ferdinand Thieriot’s 70stem Geburtstag. Dienstag, den 7. April,’ *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*, Vol. 39, No. 15, 9 April 1908, p. 350.

<sup>5</sup> Walter Zielke, foreword to Ferdinand Thieriot, *2. Konzert für Violoncello*, AlbisMusic, Brunsbüttel, 2021, p. III.

the imaginative portrayal is almost continually sustained, and so we believe that we have made the case for a thorough appreciation of this poetic work.<sup>6</sup>

Thanks to a recommendation from Brahms, Thieriot escaped his nomadic phase and was engaged in Graz – on the eastern edge of the Alps and 150 kilometres distant from Vienna – as artistic director of the Styrian Musikverein and teacher of harmony. Founded in 1815, the organisation ‘held weekly rehearsals and gave regular concerts for their members and for the general public.’<sup>7</sup> In addition, the group ‘always strived to work in two areas at the same time, laying the seeds for significant achievements: in concerts and in the musical education of the younger generations.’<sup>8</sup> Thieriot, who had won the post over the local native Heinrich von Herzogenberg, among others, embraced his duties in Graz in October 1870 and remained there for sixteen years.<sup>9</sup> Siegmund von Hausegger, whose childhood overlapped most of Thieriot’s tenure as music director, described the locale and its inhabitants:

Enclosed in a wide arc by the rugged massifs which protect the fertile, gentle plain at their foot from the storms of the Styrian highlands, lies my hometown of Graz, on both banks of the Mur, which often swells overnight into a charming mountain stream. Overlooked by the castle hill, the city sprawls from one end of the valley to the other amidst an abundance of gardens and parks. [...] In the salon of the lawyer and private lecturer for music history, Dr. Friedrich von Hausegger, an impressive circle of artists and art-loving amateurs regularly gathered for informal musical events, in which the master of the house proved an excellent pianist and the wife and hostess was gifted with an unusually lovely voice.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> H. ....n., ‘Ferd. Thieriot. Op. 13. Loch Lomond. Schottischer See. Symphonisches Phantasiebild für Orchester’, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Vol. 65, No. 6, 5 February 1869, p. 47. A trip to Scotland in the mid-1860s inspired a clutch of pieces beyond *Loch Lomond*, such as the unfinished operas *Armor und Daura* and *Die Hochländer* based on the epic poems of James Macpherson.

<sup>7</sup> Hans Wamlek, ‘125 Jahre Musikverein für Steiermark’, *Zeitschrift für Musik*, Vol. 107, No. 11, November 1940, p. 690.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Wickenhauser, ‘Der steiermärkische Musikverein in Graz’, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Vol. 72, Nos. 22/23, 24 May 1905, p. 466.

<sup>9</sup> Brahms’ endorsement of Thieriot may not have been entirely selfless: he kept a picture of Herzogenberg’s wife, Lisl, on his desk until the day he died.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Kinder und Jugendjahre in Graz’, *Süddeutsche Monatshefte*, Vol. 2, No. 6, June 1905, pp. 462–63.

Thieriot's students would include the Romanian conductor-composer Gheorghe Dima, the music pedagogue Adolf Doppler, the performer-composer Hans Freiherr Zois von Edelstein, the Kapellmeister and choral director Fritz Prelinger, and the violin virtuoso Marie Soldat-Röger. Thieriot's music-making also made an impression on a young Gymnasium student:

The Styrian Musikverein held its events in the Rittersaal at that time; the conductor was Ferdinand Thieriot, the successor of my teacher [Wilhelm Mayer]. The Fourth Symphony by Beethoven was played. The very first note of the introduction touched me like tidings from another world. I listened breathlessly [...]. It was then that I declared afresh that I wanted to become a musician.<sup>11</sup>

So went Felix Weingartner's first exposure to Thieriot's conducting of Beethoven.

In this sequestered musical environment Thieriot's creative output blossomed alongside his teaching and performance (he also played cello with the Casper Quartet), and something like thirty opus numbers were composed during his stay. They varied from the Lieder and piano works of his first year to the Symphony in F minor (1872), Piano Quartet No. 2 in E flat major, Op. 30 (1875), *Sinfonietta* in E major, Op. 55 (1876), the Piano Concerto No. 1 in B flat major (1878) and finally a *Serenade* for string orchestra in F major, Op. 44 (1885), which *The Musical Times* confidently asserted was the work of 'a pupil of Brahms' and that 'the melodies of the various themes are good, and are so set out as to obtain the best possible effect'.<sup>12</sup> Thieriot's earlier compositions were also performed, including *Loch Lomond*, Op. 13, and the *Turandot* Overture, Op. 43.<sup>13</sup> Wilhelm Kienzl, who spent most of his youth in Graz, described approaching music director Thieriot with a repertoire proposal, which Kienzl later recorded in a single sentence of heroic proportions:

<sup>11</sup> Felix Weingartner, *Lebenserinnerungen*, Vol. 1, Orell Füssli, Zurich, 1928, p. 55.

<sup>12</sup> Anon., 'Serenade für Streich-Orchester. Componirt von Ferdinand Thieriot (Op. 44)', *The Musical Times*, Vol. 30, No. 559, 1 September 1889, p. 552.

<sup>13</sup> Ferdinand Bischoff, *Chronik des Steiermärkischen Musikvereines, Festschrift zur Feier des fünfundsiebenzigjährigen Bestandes des Vereines*, Verlag des steiermärkischen Musikvereines, Graz, 1890, p. 239.

I still vividly remember the gentle laugh, accompanied by good humoured benevolence, which escaped him when, in my youthful enthusiasm for my idol Mozart, I tried to persuade him – the music director who seemed to me to be omnipotent – to perform all of Mozart's six hundred and twenty-six works, as listed in the well-known Köchel Mozart catalogue, in order (!), that is, strictly chronologically over the course of one year (!) in Graz, in three concert halls of different sizes, in the church, in the theatre and so on, whereby it would just be a bagatelle of twenty-one operas, forty-one symphonies, seventy-six other orchestral works, fifty-three sacred, ninety-nine chamber works and much vocal, piano and violin music.<sup>14</sup>

The enterprise was understandably shelved, though Mozart continued to appear often on programmes, as did many other masters, Wagner among them. But Thieriot's devotion to Brahms resulted in many performances in Graz, including the four symphonies, two serenades, two piano concertos, violin concerto, major overtures and smaller works.<sup>15</sup>

While Thieriot was based in Graz, contact with Brahms was friendly but often in arrears, as indicated by a letter Brahms wrote in October 1872:

Dear Herr Thieriot [...] it is a real shame that I have to put such questions to you, since you live in the provinces! And yet you must be quite comfortable, as the capital does not seem to tempt you at all! Will you yet again fail to be in our audience this year? Shall I already tell you the programmes (?) or will you not attend in any case? Though you do not seem to be a much more diligent letter writer than I am, you will know that our Marxsen has lost his sister. Meanwhile, best regards and thanks. Your devoted J. Brahms.  
Vienna, Karlsgasse 4.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Wilhelm Kienzl, *Lebenswanderung* and *Kienzl's Briefwechsel mit Peter Rosegger*, ed. Hans Sittner, Amalthea, Zurich, 1953, p. 50. Kienzl was a Wagnerian (though one tempered by a folk-music orientation), whom Brahms dismissed as 'a pompous windbag' (Richard Heuberger, *Erinnerungen an Johannes Brahms. Tagebuchnotizen aus den Jahren 1875 bis 1897*, ed. Kurt Hofmann, Hans Schneider, Tutzing, 1976, p. 152).

<sup>15</sup> Bischoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 234–35.

<sup>16</sup> Cited in Werner Ehrbrecht, booklet essay, *Ferdinand Thieriot: Octet, Op. 62, Quintet, Op. 80, Mithras Octet*, Arte Nova Classics 74321 49689 2, 1997, p. 2.

After Brahms' needling ('I send my best wishes to [...] Thieriot, who has certainly not yet left his house!<sup>17</sup>'), Thieriot finally made a trip to Vienna and was present at Brahms' evening table on 11 April 1885.<sup>18</sup> The great composer had become disturbed by the pernicious New German influence that the pedagogue and writer Friedrich von Hausegger was spreading in Graz. Richard Heuberger had noted previously that 'Brahms spoke very sympathetically about Thieriot and regretted that he had not gained a firm foothold in Graz despite all his diligence.'<sup>19</sup> The following spring, Brahms returned to the theme:

He was very sorry that Ferdinand Thieriot had to leave Graz. [Brahms said] 'one must be happy if in the more intelligent of the small cities – the village of Graz – there is a respectable, accomplished man who is able to make an impact through teaching and the example of his humanity. Now they have spoiled this.'<sup>20</sup>

In fact, though his post teaching harmony was cut for budgetary reasons, Thieriot expressed himself quite satisfied with his treatment during his long stay in Graz, recalling: 'In the beautiful Alpine landscape, I passed an extremely happy and inspiring time, in the midst of a set of people all highly cultivated, and all so enthusiastic over music'.<sup>21</sup> He was content to return to his native northern Germany, but his presence in Graz would be missed.

The Styrian Musikverein suffers a serious loss with the departure of Ferdinand Thieriot, who has decided to leave our city and move to Germany. Active for 15 years as the dedicated

<sup>17</sup> Letter from Brahms to E. W. Fritsch, dated 14 June 1883, in *Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Breitkopf & Härtel, Bartolf Senff, J. Rieter-Biedermann, C. F. Peters, E. W. Fritsch und Robert Lienau*, ed. Wilhelm Altmann, Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, Berlin, 1920, p. 347.

<sup>18</sup> Heuberger, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29. As Heuberger continued, 'I then told [Brahms] about the splendid plans for a New German School of Music, at which he laughed quite thoroughly. – He said that he now believed that Dr. Muck (currently a theatre conductor in Graz) would take Thieriot's place' (*ibid.*, p. 152). Karl Muck did indeed take Thieriot's place, but only for a single season, afterwards leaving for the more prestigious Deutsches Landestheater in Prague and Angelo Neumann's travelling Wagner company. Muck's successor in Graz was Wilhelm Kienzl.

<sup>21</sup> Arthur Elson, *Modern Composers of Europe*, L. C. Page, Boston, 1904, p. 53.

artistic director of our music society, Thieriot knew how to win the sympathy of the larger part of the public. He directed the orchestra with an expert, reliable hand, though not without drive and inner passion, and it would be bitter ingratitude not to remember the level of orchestral performance and concert attendance before him, and how much each have improved under his care. An excellent teacher, [he] will be sorely missed by a large circle of grateful students whom he had trained to become the best musical contingent in our city. As a composer distinguished by knowledge of a deep gravity, masterly handling of form and instrumentation, and by a fundamentally healthy and joyful nature, Thieriot's name deserved to be better known. This was hindered by extreme modesty, a thoroughly introverted, publicity-shunning nature, which finds its ideals, satisfaction and contentment in its own soul, its own consciousness. These otherwise rare and estimable qualities in a human being are detrimental to the artist who, by virtue of his ability, is entitled to stand before the world with self-confidence and make himself known through his numerous songs, and piano, instrumental and chamber music works. We fear that the Musikverein is unlikely to succeed in finding a suitable replacement at the helm, one with Thieriot's abilities and eminence.<sup>22</sup>

Thieriot later explained to Emil Krause:

The time in Graz, which Thieriot remembers with particular fondness, gave his artistic work the most varied stimulation, and this was influenced to no small degree by the social interchange in the house of the aesthete and jurist Friedrich von Hausegger and with the other highly respected personalities who stayed there, such as [Heinrich von] Herzogenberg, [the Styrian Governor Moritz Blagatinschegg] von Kaiserfeld, government councillor Noë, architect [Walter] Hofmann, etc. At the musical matinees in Hausegger's house, Thieriot led a small ladies' singing group, the later 'Tschampa Quartet'. Hausegger, who unconditionally embraced Wagner's reforms, was unable to win Thieriot over to the new direction. Nevertheless, the contact was no less personally cordial.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> M.A.C.K., 'Berichte: Graz', *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*, Vol. 16, No. 13, 19 March 1885, pp. 165–66.

<sup>23</sup> Krause, *op. cit.*, p. 350.



And so it continued: nearly a decade after leaving his position, Thieriot set Friedrich von Hausegger's text *Das Märchen vom Schnee* for declamatory voice, soprano and tenor solo, women's and mixed chorus (or women's chorus alone) and piano, Op. 63. Hausegger's son Siegmund would feature Thieriot's compositions on his conducting programmes for years to come.

Thieriot had built a fine reputation as a composer, particularly of chamber music. Hermann Mendel and August Reissmann commented: 'Of his compositions, which testify to his talent and skill, in particular a number of chamber works have found wider circulation and recognition.'<sup>24</sup> The next period was divided between a fleeting stint in Weimar and longer stays in Hamburg and Leipzig, where he strengthened his relationships with publishers (which included leading firms such as Eulenberg, Hofmeister, Ries & Erler and Rieter-Biedermann), played with the Payne Quartet, and served on the board of the Bach Gesellschaft. Brahms' interest in Thieriot's compositions did not diminish: asking Edmund Astor of Rieter-Biedermann for several new scores, Brahms emphasised that 'I would be gladly and cordially obliged to you particularly for the Thieriot; I am quite eager for the last work',<sup>25</sup> Thieriot's *Cantate der Klage und des Trostes* ('Cantata of Lament and Consolation'), Op. 50. The peerless musical scholar Hugo Riemann praised Thieriot's 'high-quality chamber music works, songs and choruses'.<sup>26</sup> Dresden heard Thieriot programmes given by the Lehmann-Osten Chorus 'with a series of choral and solo compositions that were accompanied with great success, bringing rich applause to the composer and all participants.'<sup>27</sup> 'Of Ferdinand Thieriot's symphonic works,' the authoritative academic Hermann Kretzschmar began, describing the composer's unaffected technique,

the most widely played is his Sinfonietta (Op. 65). This composition is a contribution to Romantic music that is unusually distinguished by its simple, natural invention, by its amiable, graceful mood and especially by its unsurpassable clarity of form. The sensual,

<sup>24</sup> *Musikalisches Conversations-Lexikon*, Vol. 10, Oppenheim, Berlin, 1886, p. 178.

<sup>25</sup> Letter dated 5 October 1890, in *Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Breitkopf & Härtel*, op. cit., p. 389.

<sup>26</sup> *Musik-Lexikon*, Max Hesse, Leipzig, 1900, p. 1132.

<sup>27</sup> Anon., 'Kirche und Konzertsaal. Dresden,' *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Vol. 71, No. 15, 16 April 1904, p. 296.

elegant Romance and the Tarantella graced with great humour are self-explanatory, and the opening movement, an Allegro moderato, which sets out as if for a beautiful stroll and in the course of its simple themes gains in both momentum and enigmatic sonorities.<sup>28</sup>

Arthur Nikisch agreed, and performed the *Sinfonietta* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra on 15 February 1893.

In 1902 Thieriot returned to his native Hamburg for good, and there his works often appeared on the concert programmes of the Hamburg Philharmonic and Singing Academy. They included a concert in 1903, at which “The clever composer, Ferdinand Thieriot, gave a “popular” orchestral concert with a selection from his own works: “Dionisia”, MS Overture, the choral “La Régine Avrillouse”, third symphony in C, a concerto for two pianos (MS), and four songs (Op. 73).”<sup>29</sup> A celebration of the composer’s 70th birthday was published by Emil Krause in the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* in 1908:

Only a relative few are as fortunate as Ferdinand Thieriot and can celebrate their 70th birthday in full mental freshness and physical vigour. The life of this ideal artist, who has always strived for the loftiest goal, is simple, unpretentious and filled with a constant joy in creation. His ability and achievement were paired with a direct modesty, and this modesty in his own worth as a composer was always influenced by a high respect for the demands that true art places on every professional. [...] Everywhere, but particularly in Hamburg, Thieriot’s works, including a concerto for violin, concerto for two pianos, his many piano pieces, songs, etc., enjoy well-deserved esteem and recognition. There is hardly a concert organisation in Hamburg that has not avidly championed the dissemination of his works. First and foremost, Julius Spengel and Ottokar Kopecky turned their attention to spreading his compositions. Brahms, Carl Reinecke, Carl von Holten and others have acted as his heralds.<sup>30</sup>

In *Der Klavier-Lehrer*, Krause added, ‘Diligence is talent, talent is diligence. The equal union of these two qualities characterises the development of an artist who in a few days,

<sup>28</sup> *Führer durch den Concertsaal*, Vol. 1, 1898, Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig, 1898, p. 682.

<sup>29</sup> Anon., ‘Foreign: Hamburg’, *The Monthly Musical Record*, Vol. 33, No. 387, 1 March 1903, p. 58.

<sup>30</sup> Krause, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

on 7 April, his 70th birthday, will have the good fortune to reflect on a continuously active career accompanied by real success.<sup>31</sup>

Though retired from the pressure of full-time employment, Thieriot's publishing history during his years in Hamburg demonstrates a persistent commitment to his craft. On 18 May 1908, an important milestone in the Hamburg performance season was reached with

a new Symphony in C sharp minor by our Ferdinand Thieriot, the fifth of the 70-year-old composer, which he penned just last year. The composition, which is consistent with the composer's style and was performed by [Music Director Julius] Sprengel in a masterful manner, was so enthusiastically received that, at the universal urging of the audience, the composer was compelled to appear on the orchestra podium at the end of the work.<sup>32</sup>

In 1913, Thieriot's wife Johanna died. The next year saw the beginning of the First World War. From his return to Hamburg until 1914, Thieriot had published an average of just under three pieces per annum, but during the conflict his production sank to less than one full work a year, the last of which was the *Prayer for Peace* ('Thou, who art also the Father of our Enemy'), Op. 98, for three-part women's chorus and piano (or organ).<sup>33</sup> After nearly four years of battlefield slaughter and civilian hardship, Thieriot's 80th jubilee, on 7 April 1918, was a relatively muted affair<sup>34</sup> – the same day saw the commencement of a German offensive, called the Battle of the Lys or Fourth Battle of Ypres, the severe casualties of which dominated the news over the next three weeks. On 11 November Germany signed the armistice with the Allies. The Allied Blockade of food and medicine was not lifted until 12 July 1919, and relief first arrived after the 'Spanish flu' had killed 260,000 German civilians. On 4 August, Thieriot died at Schwarzenbek near Hamburg at the age of 81. The *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* managed

<sup>31</sup> 'Ferdinand Thieriot. Zu seinem 70. Geburtstag', *Der Klavier-Lehrer*, Vol. 31, No. 7, 1 April 1908, p. 97.

<sup>32</sup> Emil Krause, 'Rundschau: Konzerte: Hamburg', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Vol. 75, No. 21, 9 July 1908, p. 446.

<sup>33</sup> Friedrich Hofmeister Musikverlag (eds.), *Musikalisch-Literarischer Monatsbericht*, Vols. 74–90, Hofmeister, Leipzig, 1902–18.

<sup>34</sup> The Hamburg Conservatoire had hosted a Thieriot evening a month before, and towards the end of the year the popular *Sinfonietta*, Op. 55, was played at a Philharmonic concert conducted by Siegmund von Hausegger.

only the shortest obituary, noting that ‘Thieriot had established a respected name as a composer of orchestral works, chamber music, Lieder and choral pieces.’<sup>35</sup>

As the twentieth century progressed, the once respected name was deleted from the major musical encyclopaedias. ‘Making matters worse’, the scholar Joachim Draheim explained,

Thieriot’s extensive musical estate – less than half of his works are in print and 96 compositions were published with Opus numbers – was relocated from the Hamburg State Library to Lauenstein Castle in Saxony in 1943 because of the World War and brought to Leningrad/St Petersburg by the Red Army in 1946. There the boxes of the archive were discovered in 1983 in a flooded cellar just in time, returned in partly damaged condition to the Hamburg State and University Library in 1991 and catalogued in 2000 by Mathias Keitel.<sup>36</sup>

Recent publications of many of these MSS by Amadeus (Winterthur) and AlbisMusic (Brunsbüttel) have brought important progress in recovering this extensive repertoire for the concert stage.

Thieriot composed in many genres, ranging from opera (*Renata*; 1898) to Lieder, from large works for mixed choir and orchestra (*Te Deum*, *Stabat Mater*, *Cantate der Klage und des Trostes* and a *Requiem* after Hebbel) to a *cappella* works for mixed, female or male chorus, and from ten symphonies and assorted other orchestral works to pieces for organ and piano (solo and four-hands). He was partial to the concerto, and wrote them for piano, for violin, for cello (three), and for organ, but also for two pianos, for violin and viola, for violin and cello, and for three violins. Yet, the very essence of Thieriot’s compositional efforts lay in chamber music, where his efforts encompassed two string octets, a string sextet, string quintet, piano quintet, two piano quartets, twelve string quartets, a flute quintet, flute quartet, clarinet quintet, eleven piano trios, two

<sup>35</sup> Anon., ‘Hamburg: Hier starb im 82. Lebensjahre der Komponist Ferdinand Thieriot’, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Vol. 86, Nos. 33–34, 14 August 1919, p. 215.

<sup>36</sup> Booklet essay, *Thieriot Piano Quartet, Op. 30, Schumann Youth Piano Quartet, Valentin Klavierquartett*, cpo 777 843-2, Georgsmarienhütte, 2014, p. 8.

string trios, two violin sonatas, five cello sonatas, and mixed ensembles that included the Octet in B flat major, Op. 62, for strings and winds.

According to Bernhard Päuler, Thieriot 'possessed the enviable gift of being able to combine in his output great melodic invention with compositional and stylistic currents and elements drawn from such diverse sources as Mendelssohn, Schumann, Spohr and Bruckner.'<sup>37</sup> Walter Zielke found Thieriot 'a composer whose style – even today – cannot simply be pigeonholed':

form, periodicity and rhythm are strongly anchored in the classical; the gesture and the preferred harmonies are those of a Mendelssohn or Schumann, charmingly, tastefully supplemented and extended, often incorporated in exquisite modulations. His preferred compositional techniques are always borrowed from the classical repository, which are then in turn, quite distinctive and almost kaleidoscopically colourful, often adorned with 'rosalias' presented to us in diverse sequences and fragments, and always done in a sympathetic and amiable manner.<sup>38</sup>

Wilhelm Altmann, an historian and violinist who presided over the music division of the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin (analogous to the British Library or Library of Congress) from 1915 to 1927, observed of a chamber work of Thieriot's: 'Although it is not the work of a fiery spirit, of a composer who stirs and shakes us to the depths of our inner being, it nevertheless offers noble and dignified music throughout, all conceived with the most perfect mastery of form.'<sup>39</sup> 'In my opinion,' Altmann concluded elsewhere, 'Thieriot deserves more attention than he has received thus far.'<sup>40</sup>

The Quintet in G major for two violins, viola and two cellos went unpublished during Thieriot's lifetime. Mathias Keitel dated the manuscript at 1914 (and assigned the archival inventory number NFT – 'Nachlass Ferdinand Thierot' – Ae07a: 1/1920/10020), and the score was published in 2003 (ed. Bernhard Päuler, Amadeus, Winterthur). The first movement *Allegro* [1] begins *piano* with two cellos launching into the regular

<sup>37</sup> Foreword to Ferdinand Thieriot, *Quintett in G-Dur für zwei Violinen, Viola und zwei Violoncelli*, Amadeus, Winterthur, 2003, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> 'Die Welt des Ferdinand Thieriot', *loc. cit.*, p. VIII.

<sup>39</sup> *Handbuch für Streichquartettspieler*, Vol. 3, Max Hesse, Berlin-Schöneberg, 1929, p. 320.

<sup>40</sup> *Handbuch für Streichquartettspieler*, Vol. 4, Heinrichshofen, Wilhelmshaven, 1974, p. 209.

crotchet rhythm of the main theme in G major (common time). Bar 14 quickens the theme, again in the cellos, with restless *forte* quavers. The demure second theme arrives *piano* in the dominant key of D major. A *tranquillo* in B major, *dolcissimo*, and a remembrance of the opening in D major give way to cadential slowing. As quavers morph to triplet crotchets, then to simple crotchets before the advent of the development, aspects of the opening theme in the violins are combined with persistent quavers in the lower voices. The two-bar sequences that hasten smoothly through D major, B flat major and E flat major reveal one of Thieriot's tell-tale traits; he was fond of using sixth, or first-inversion, chords to give tonal transitions a subtler bass line than root position would allow, particularly during chromatic sequences. The first cello delivers the second theme in E flat major and fragments from the exposition take the development through C major and E minor. Unstable tonality accompanies a semiquaver *crescendo* to *ff*, the rhythm lightly jostled by juxtaposed  $\frac{2}{4}$  bars. Calm is reached at a secure patch of B major as the main theme reappears transfigured, slowed to minims, in a poignantly noble *pp* chorale. This moment confirms Altmann's observation that Thieriot 'is particularly adept at taking a motif that may not in itself seem very captivating, but developing it in extraordinary fashion'.<sup>41</sup> Eight bars of modulation and *ritardando* serve to prepare the recapitulation of the main theme in G major at *a tempo*, the progress of which is heightened by increasing chromaticism and a six-bar pedal point on A flat in the second cello. The diffident second theme now reappears in the tonic key, and a brief *tranquillo* in E major (the submediant) only emphasises the pre-eminence of G major. When the latter returns, a bustling codetta on the main theme ends in three *ff* accented chords: G major in second inversion, a D major seventh, and finally, in double stops throughout, an unshakable G major chord in which the tonic note appears a convincing six times across three octaves.

In the *Lento* [2], a simpler, song-form affair, the cellos begin *piano* with eight bars of a dirge-like duo in G minor ( $\frac{2}{4}$ ). The theme winds through the ensemble, rising to *forte* before the first violin introduces a sweetly lyrical contrasting theme in G major at

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

bar 34. After the melody shifts to first cello, the contrapuntal texture becomes denser before a return of the mournful opening theme. This G minor section is enhanced by cadenza-like cascades in sextuplet demisemiquavers from the first violin and a last taste of G major before a fragmented return of the dirge theme in G minor, in which, after *ritardando* and *diminuendo*, the movement concludes.

The following *Presto* [3] is a scherzo-like romp in E flat major ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ), with the opening melody in quavers given to first violin above *staccato* crotchets. After a repeat of the first 24 bars, a denser weave and increased chromaticism precede a return of the opening, making a *crescendo* to a striking half-diminished seventh chord built on A, *forzando*. *Un poco largo* (Trio) brings an affecting relaxation in A flat (subdominant) major before a truncated return of the opening breaks into developmental fragments. A potential *pp* ending cadence is proven deceptive when followed by a more powerful version in *ff*.

The finale, *Allegro non troppo* [4], begins in unison with a two-crotchet anacrusis launching the genial *piano staccato* first theme in G major, *alla breve*. A quite different melody is introduced at bar 27, with syncopation emphasising the second beat of the bar, but its continued use of *piano, staccato* and particularly its G major key bind it to the opening theme. A chordal transition, first *ff*, then *pp*, prefaces contrasting B themes in new tonal regions, first *dolce* and slurred in the cellos, then *tranquillo* in F sharp major with crotchet triplets in the viola. Both of these melodies are then repeated, with the *dolce* slurred lines given to the violins and the *tranquillo* now in B major. An extension of the triplet phrase rises to *forte energico*, subsiding at a short, A minor iteration of the first A theme before devolving into transitory tonal regions and fragments, similar to the developmental C element in sonata rondo form. An incomplete statement of the second, syncopated A theme in E flat major brings a slowing before the whole suite of B themes returns at *a tempo*, in G minor and the ensuing *tranquillo* in G major, with the repeat of the latter in C major. The reoccurrence of B before A indicates a modified arch-form (ABCBA), where C serves as development. Finally, the A section returns, *piano* in G major but now in note-values twice as swift. As before, the genial first theme is succeeded by the second, syncopated motif, again in G major. A codetta of nineteen bars begins *piano*, *Poco Andante*, before an *accelerando* hurtles towards a G major close, *ff*.

The 2 *Adagios for Viola or Violoncello and Organ*, Op. 41 (Friedrich Hofmeister, Leipzig, 1887; reissued in 1998), comprise two ABA, or song-form, pieces. The *Adagio molto mesto* [5] in common time has a doleful first subject in B minor and an airier second theme in quaver triplets and G major. The return of the opening finishes on a last fermata chord in B major. The *Adagio ma non troppo* [6] ( $\frac{6}{4}$ ) offers a noble, long-breathed opening in A major, balanced by a conflicted theme in D minor. With the return of the A material, the melody is in the organ and the string soloist plays a new descant before later joining in the tune, and the piece settles *dolce* and *piano diminuendo* into a last fermata-held A major chord, *pp*. ‘These two Adagios’, the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* concluded, ‘like everything that has come to our attention from the pen of this capable composer, convey an impression of seriousness, solidity and exceptional dignity. With their noble sentiment and characterful nature, the two pieces would grace any sacred concert programme.’<sup>42</sup>

The *Four Fantasy Pieces* for Violin and Piano, Op. 28, which Thieriot dedicated to his father, were published by Robert Seitz of Leipzig in 1875. All are composed in simple ABA form, but offer subtle details that make them an attractive suite. The *Quasi Andante* [7] begins with an engaging Schumannesque theme in quavers, *dolce* in F major ( $\frac{6}{8}$ ). The contrasting middle section in F minor is far more rhapsodic. After a return of the first theme, a coda leads to the expected F major close, enhanced by a stratospheric F in the violin (two octaves above the top of the treble stave). The brisk *Tempo moderato* [8] is, in contrast, immediately more Brahmsian, with a discontented opening theme in E minor ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) countered by a B section of extended tonal instability. The return of A fades to a *pp fermata*-held E minor chord. The *Andante* [9] offers an attractive, songful melody in D major ( $\frac{2}{4}$ ) set against a plaintive, triplet-laden theme in B minor. The reappearance of the first theme is varied with syncopation and dotted rhythms, ending after *diminuendo* and *ritard* in D major, *pp*. The finale, *Allegro* [10], opens with a mournful motif in A minor (*alla breve*) that is given ample space to expand. The B section reuses opening thematic material, but differs in being

<sup>42</sup> s-r., ‘Ferdinand Thieriot. Zwei Adagios für Violoncell und Orgel, op. 41’, *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*, Vol. 20, No. 35, 22 August 1889, p. 413.



developmentally and tonally unstable. The restoration of A minor at *a tempo* is followed by a coda that brings a *pp* finish, as a B minor seventh chord yields to A minor.

Mathias Keitel could assign no date to the *Larghetto* for Viola and Organ [11], and it remains unpublished (though a copy of the manuscript is available from the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Hamburg; NFT: Ad10c: 1/1920/10004). The brief piece starts with four bars of organ introduction, *pp* in B minor ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ), before a plaintive viola entrance, *dolce espressivo* with leanings toward D major. The D-minor middle section is thickened by quaver triplets before the return of the slower note-values of the opening, which begins in B minor but ends, after *ritard.* and *diminuendo*, in a D major final chord, *pp*.

Thieriot's Suite for Three Cellos is another manuscript to which Mathias Keitel could affix no date. The published edition of archival inventory number NFT: Ae23Aa: 1/1920/10020 was first issued in 2003 (ed. Yvonne Morgan, Amadeus, Winterthur). The Suite begins with an *Allegro giocoso* [12] in D major ( $\frac{6}{8}$ ) moving in vigorous *forte* quavers. Song-form is again employed, as behoves short constructs, and a change to  $\frac{2}{4}$  metre brings a hesitant *piano staccato* theme in G major. The swashbuckling opening returns in  $\frac{6}{8}$ , and D major is solidly in place through a fourteen-bar coda and the *ff* accented last chord. Presenting a remarkable emotional voyage considering that the length of the movement is just 57 bars, the *Molto lento* [13], begins with the third cello chanting the mournful theme in D minor ( $\frac{2}{4}$ ) to sparse accompaniment from the two higher voices. Cheery homophonic movement in B flat major counters the mood at bar 17, though the inevitable crushing D minor return brings an unforgiving *pp* ending in open fifths. A *Tempo di Menuetto* [14] begins with a jaunty upward arpeggio and subsequent falling line in the first cello (mirrored by opposite movements in the third), *poco forte* in D major ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ). After a repeat of the opening, complementary material in A major precedes a return of the first theme. Then a change of key to G major arrives in a trio-like lighter mood, *piano*, with quaver triplets and dotted rhythms. This section is repeated before the material is reframed in A minor, which prepares the ostensible return of the menuet beginning. But this is song-form with a difference: D major and the melodic outline of the opening do reappear, but the  $\frac{3}{4}$  metre is forced into a new  $\frac{2}{4}$  *Poco allegro* frame that, with more densely filled bars and added *staccato*, acts as

an accelerated coda to the menuet. After a reflective *piano dolce tranquillo*, the final cadential progression begins *piano pizzicato*, but ends on a D major chord *forte arco*. The finale, *Choral: poco adagio* [15], is shorter, a chorale that expanded on the fourteen-bar final chorale of Bach's Cantata No. 85 (No. 6, 'Ist Gott mein Schutz und treuer Hirt'). Bach set the chorale in C minor, whereas Thieriot uses D minor (common time) to deliver his well-balanced contrapuntal weave. He also added *forte* markings at three high points which correspond to the missing chorale texts 'Ist Gott mein Schutz und treuer Hirt' ('As God is my protector and faithful shepherd') in bars 1–2, 'Weicht, alle meine Feinde' ('Yield, all my enemies') in bars 7–8, and 'Ich habe Gott zum Freunde' ('I have God as my friend') in bars 17–18. This anguished yet hopeful threnody of a mere 23 bars concludes with a *diminuendo* to a *pp* fermata-held D major chord.

*William Melton is the author of Humperdinck: A Life of the Composer of Hänsel und Gretel (Toccata Press, London, 2020) and The Wagner Tuba: A History (edition ebenos, Aachen, 2008) and was a contributor to The Cambridge Wagner Encyclopedia (2013). He did postgraduate studies in music history at the University of California at Los Angeles before a four-decade career as a horn-player with the Sinfonie Orchester Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle). Further writings include articles on lesser-known Romantics, including Felix Draeseke, Friedrich Gernsheim, Henri Kling and Friedrich Klose, and he has researched and edited the scores of the 'Forgotten Romantics' series for the publisher edition ebenos.*

The **Hamburg Chamber Players** are an ensemble performing chamber music with a flexible line-up. The original members – Ian Mardon (violin), Julia Mensching (viola), Rolf Herbrechtsmeyer (cello) and Yuko Hirose (piano) – played together from 1999 to 2021, giving numerous concerts in Germany and other German-speaking countries. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, Rolf Herbrechtsmeyer and Yuko Hirose stepped back to become honorary members, and the cellist Olga Dowbusch-Lubotsky joined the permanent nucleus.

The three central members often appear as a duo or a trio and can access a wider range of repertoire by inviting distinguished guest players to join them. Their performances take a variety of forms, not only through the number of players in a given programme but also by varying the line-up within each concert. Listeners are guided through the thematic notion

behind the concerts, with the musicians giving insights into the historical context of the pieces and the lives of their composers.

**Ian Mardon**, violin, regularly appears as soloist and chamber musician in concerts in North America and in Germany. He has played in a variety of TV films and shows, in commercials and on numerous albums. For many years he has been the artistic director of the Hamburg Chamber Players. He studied with the famous Canadian violinist and Paganini Prize winner Philippe Djokic at Dalhousie University in Halifax and with the Tchaikovsky Prize winner Masuko Ushioda at the New England Conservatory in Boston, where he was awarded his Master of Music qualification. He plays a 1775 instrument by J. B. Guadagnini.



**Matthias Brommann** grew up in a family of musicians and studied violin at the Hamburg Conservatoire under Isabella Petrosian (a pupil of David Oistrakh) and with Hermann Krebbers in Amsterdam. He was concert-master of the Eremitage Orchestra in Basel and of the Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra under Justus Frantz, and for many years he was a member of the James Last Orchestra. Alongside his versatile career as a string-player, he trained as an actor and has appeared in films including *Flucht und Vertreibung* ('Flight and Expulsion'). He is also a successful composer and producer of film music and 'New Classic Music'.

**Julia Mensching**, viola, studied with Andra Darzins and Jakob Zeijl at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hamburg. She is a winner of the German national competition 'Jugend Musiziert' and played in the Albert Schweizer Youth Orchestra. In 2006 she graduated from the Hochschule für Musik in Frankfurt, where she undertook additional studies in historical-instrument practice. Her musical training was fine-tuned through master-classes with Tabea Zimmermann and Thomas Riebl, among others. She has played in orchestras in Wiesbaden and Essen. Besides western classical music, she also performs Arabic music on the viola – on an instrument, indeed, of her own construction.



**Olga Dowbusch-Lubotsky** was born in Saratov, Russia, and started to play the cello at the age of seven. She studied in Moscow and Hamburg, where she completed her studies at Hochschule für Musik und Theater under Wolfgang Mehlhorn. She has given well-received concerts in Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia, Spain and Sweden, and has appeared at major music festivals across the world, including Kuchmo und Savonlinna in Finland, Peter de Grote in the Netherlands and the New Jersey Festival in the USA. For many years she was a member of the Lubotsky Trio, with Mark Lubotsky and Dmitri Vinnik.

**Suren Anisonyan** is a founding member of the David Quartet and of the Limusin Trio ('Literature Music Inteam'), which links music with literature and poetry. His orchestral activity includes working as a cellist and/or principal cello with the Yerevan Chamber Orchestra, the Philharmonie der Nationen, the Neue Philharmonie Hamburg and, currently, the HansePhilharmonie Hamburg and the Würth Philharmonic Künzelsau. Another feature of his music-making has been playing first cello in musicals at the Tecklenburg open-air festival, in the adaptation by Wolfgang Hofer, Michael Reed, Moritz Schneider and Christian Struppeck of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's play *Der Besuch der alten Dame* as a musical, and *Mozart!* by Silvester Levay and Michael Kunze.



**Clovis Michon** was born in Lyon in 1987. He first had music lessons at the age of four and discovered the cello for himself when he was eight. Soon afterwards he was beginning to appear in concerts. He attended conservatoires in Lyon, Villeurbanne and finally Dijon under Christian Wolf, the cellist of the Manfred Quartet. Since 2012 he has been studying with Alexander Baillie at the Hochschule für Künste Bremen, where he gained his Masters in artistic education in 2016. He has been mentored by such teachers as Lluís Claret, Iagoba Fanlo, Erkki Lahesmaa and the Leipzig String Quartet.

For some years now he has worked with emerging musicians and helped talented young players prepare for admission exams and auditions. An enthusiastic chamber musician, he founded the Bremen String Quartet in 2012 and regularly takes part in a variety of chamber-music projects. In recent years he has appeared across the world, with concerts in Austria, Bulgaria, China, France, Germany and elsewhere.

The musical training of the Italian pianist **Andrea Merlo** has led him around the world. On completing his course at the Parma Conservatoire under Maria Luisa Franco in 2004, he continued his studies at the Academy of Music in Vancouver. In 2007 a deep interest in Russian music took him to Moscow, where he studied at the Conservatoire with the folk artist Vera Gornostaeva, the Georgian pianist Ruvim Ostrovsky and the Russian pianist Valery Piassetsky, under whose guidance he graduated with distinction in 2013. During his stay in Russia, he performed widely and gave master-classes. He completed his studies in 2014 at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hamburg under Ralf Nattkemper. He has won solo and duo prizes at numerous national and international competitions. He has also travelled widely on concert tours, including appearances as a soloist and as a chamber musician in Austria, Canada, Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia and the USA.



Even as a young man, **Alexander Bürkle** was active as an organist in small churches in Offenburg (Baden). After studies in medicine and many years on the move for work, he and his wife settled on the island of Reichenau on Lake Constance, where he has resumed his activities in church music; he also very much enjoys chamber music. In his day job he is a professor in the biology department of Konstanz University.



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Recording engineers: Karola Parry (Quintet, *Fantasy Pieces* and Suite) and Andreas Werner (*2 Adagios, Larghetto*)

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## FERDINAND THIERIOT Chamber Music, Volume Two

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<b>Quintet in G major for two violins, viola and two cellos (1914)</b>	<b>27:11</b>
1 I <i>Allegro</i>	10:04
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3 III <i>Presto</i>	3:03
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<b>2 Adagios for Viola or Violoncello and Organ, Op. 41 (1887)</b>	<b>9:14</b>
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<b>Four Fantasy Pieces for Violin and Piano, Op. 28 (1875)</b>	<b>11:57</b>
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11 <b>Larghetto for Viola and Organ (undated)</b>	<b>4:32</b>
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<b>Suite for Three Cellos (undated)</b>	<b>11:04</b>
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### Hamburg Chamber Players

Ian Mardon, violin 1–4 7–10  
Matthias Brommann, violin 1–4  
Julia Mensching, viola 1–6 11  
Olga Dowbusch-Lubotsky,  
cello 1–4 12–15

Suren Anisonyan,  
cello 1–4 12–15  
Clovis Michon, cello 12–15  
Andrea Merlo, piano 7–10  
Alexander Bürkle, organ 5 6 11

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