



HERMANN BERENS d.ä  
1826-1880

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Erstes Gesellschafts-Quartett

Källkritisk utgåva av/Critical edition by Cécile Bardoux Lovén

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# Erstes Gesellschafts-Quartett

Op. 23

1

Hermann Berens [d.ä.]  
(1826–1880)

Allegro

Violino

Violoncello

Primo

Secondo

9

cresc.

f

cresc.

f

cresc.

f



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17

ff

*8va-*

ff

24

ff

(*8va*)

ff

30

(8va)

pp

pp

pp

ff

35

40

*ff*

*dim.*

*pp*

*ff*

*dim.*

*p*

*loco*

*(8va)*

*ff*

*dim.*

*pp*

*ff*

*dim.*

*pp*

46

*p*

54

61

66

*8va* - loco

70

*8va* - loco

*f*

*p*

*f*

*p*

*f*

*p*

*f*

*p*

75

81

85

*p*

*f* *p*

*sul G*

*f* *pp*

*p*

*f* *p*

*p*

*f* *pp*

92

*cresc.*

*fz*

*cresc.*

*fz*

*cresc.*

*ff*

*cresc.*

*ff*

99

pp

pp

pp

pp

#:

ff

pp

pp

pp<sup>3</sup>

ff

pp<sup>3</sup>

105

cresc.

ff

cresc.

ff

1.

ff

8va

cresc.

ff

1.

ff

cresc.

ff

110 2.

*(8va)*

2.

*ff*

*p*

*pp*

*ff*

*pp*

116

*(8va)*

*ff*

121

pizz.

f

arco

(8va)

legato

f

126

ff

ff

(8va)

ff

ff

3

130

*8va*

*p*

135

*8va*

*p*

141

(8va) - - - - -

*f*

(8va) - - - - -

*f*

*f*

148

loco

*ff*

*ff*

153

pizz.

*p*

*f*

157

*pp*

arco

*pp*

*dimin.*

*p*

*pp*

164

*cresc.*

*f*

*cresc.*

*f*

*cresc.*

*f*

174

*ff*

*p*

*ff*

*p*

*(8va)*

*ff*

*p*

*ff*

*ff*

180

(8va)

f

ff

loco

p

186

*p*

*p*

*8va-*

*p*

191

(8va)-

196

(8va)-

201

(8va) - loco

*p*

*p*

*p*

206

*p*

*p*

*p*

*p*

214

*p*

*f*

*f*

220

*p*

*p*

*p*

*p*

*8va*

*p*

225

(8va) 1

loco

*p*

230

*f*

*p*

*f*

*pp*

*f*

*p*

*p*

*f*

*p*

*f*

*p*

*p*

*f*

*p*

*p*

*f*

*p*

*p*

235

This section contains three staves of musical notation. The top staff uses a treble clef, the middle staff a bass clef, and the bottom staff a treble clef. Measure 235 starts with a dynamic of **p**. The first two measures have crescendo markings (*cresc.*) and slurs. The third measure has a dynamic of **fz**. Measures 236 and 237 also feature crescendos and slurs. Measure 238 has a dynamic of **fz p**. Measures 239 and 240 continue with crescendos and slurs. Measure 240 ends with a dynamic of **f**.

240

This section contains three staves of musical notation. The top staff uses a treble clef, the middle staff a bass clef, and the bottom staff a treble clef. Measures 240 and 241 start with rests. Measure 242 begins with a dynamic of **f**, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. Measure 243 begins with a dynamic of **f**, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. Measure 244 begins with a dynamic of **ff**, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. Measure 245 begins with a dynamic of **p**, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. Articulations include *8va* (octave up) and *loco* (locally).

244

*8va-*

*ff*

*p*

*8va-*

*p*

*ff*

*p*

250

254

(8va)

258

*ff*

*ff*

(8va) loco

8va loco

*f*

*f*

263

pizz.

pizz.

*8va*

*p*

*p*

267

arco

arco

*p*

*f*

*p*

(*8va*) - loco

*f*

*p*

*f*

*p*

271

f  
f  
fz

275

ff  
ff  
8va----- loco  
8va----- loco  
ff  
ff

2

## Andante

Violino

Violoncello *p*

Primo

Secondo *p*

6

*f*

*ff*

*p*

12

p

p

18

cresc.

f

cresc.

f

23

*p*

*pp*

28

pizz.

pizz.

32

*staccato*

35

39

arco  
*f*  
arco  
*f*

*8va----- loco*  
*f*                   *f*                   *p*

*ff*   *marcato*

44

*f*

*f*

(8va)  
*ff*

*f*

49

(8va)

53

56

*(8va)*

loco

59

*8va-*

62

(8<sup>va</sup>)

*ff*

*ff*

64

*ff*

*ff*

66

67

68

dim.

dim.

70

p

p

p

pp

pp

72

p

pp

3

3

p

p

p

78

ritardando pizz. arco  
pizz. arco pp  
8va loco pp  
pp  
pp

3

**Menuetto. Allegro ma non troppo**

Violino

Violoncello

Primo

Secondo

p

p

8

*p*

*f*

*cresc.*

*f*

*p*

14

*f*

*ff*

*p*

*pizz.*

*f*

*ff*

*p*

*f*

*ff*

*p*

*f*

*ff*

*p*

21

28

35

Musical score for piano, page 39, measures 35-38. The score consists of four staves. The top two staves show melodic lines with various dynamics (fz, ff, p) and performance instructions like 'ff' and 'p'. The bottom two staves provide harmonic support with sustained notes and chords.

42

Musical score for piano, page 39, measures 42-45. The score consists of four staves. The top two staves feature eighth-note patterns with dynamic markings 'ff' and 'ff'. The bottom two staves show harmonic progression with sustained notes and chords.

48

p

p

54

p

p

62

*cresc.*

*ff*

*p*

*cresc.*

*ff*

*p*

*cresc.*

*ff*

*p*

*cresc.*

*ff*

*pp*

*p*

69

*f*

*p*

*pizz.*

*f*

*p*

*p*

*(8va) - - - loco*

*p*

*p*

*ff*

*p*

*ff*

75

*p cresc.*      *arco*

*p cresc.*      *ff*

*ff*      *p*      *ff*

*8va*      *cresc.*      *ff*      *p*      *ff*

*loco*

*8va*

*p cresc.*      *ff*

*p*      *ff*

Trio. Un poco meno mosso

82

*p*

*legato*

89

p

95

p

ff ff

f p ff

102

*ff*

*ff*

*p*

*ff*

*p*

A musical score page featuring three staves of music for two cellos. The top staff begins with a rest followed by a melodic line starting on the eighth note of the first measure. The dynamic is marked 'p' (piano). The middle staff contains rhythmic patterns with a dynamic of 'f' (fortissimo) in the first measure and 'p' (pianissimo) in the second measure. The bottom staff shows a bassline with a dynamic of 'f' in the first measure and 'p' in the second measure. The page number '109' is located at the top left.

115

This page contains three staves of musical notation. The top staff uses a treble clef, the middle staff a bass clef, and the bottom staff a treble clef. The key signature is one flat. Measure 115 consists of six measures. The first measure has eighth notes. The second measure has eighth notes. The third measure has a dotted half note followed by an eighth note. The fourth measure has eighth notes. The fifth measure has eighth notes. The sixth measure has eighth notes. A dashed line with '(8va)' above it separates the end of measure 115 from the beginning of measure 120.

120

This page contains three staves of musical notation. The top staff uses a treble clef, the middle staff a bass clef, and the bottom staff a treble clef. The key signature is one flat. Measure 120 consists of six measures. The first measure has eighth notes. The second measure has eighth notes. The third measure has eighth notes. The fourth measure has eighth notes. The fifth measure has eighth notes. The sixth measure has eighth notes. A dashed line with '(8va)' above it separates the end of measure 120 from the beginning of measure 125.

125

(8<sup>va</sup>)

M.D.C.

4

*Allegro commodo*

Violino

Violoncello

Primo

*p*

Secondo

*p*

7

*ff*

*ff*

*8va*

*ff*

13

*p*

*pp*

*(8va)*

*loco*

*p*

*p*

19

26

32

(8va)

38

loco

(8va) loco

ff

ff

ff

p

ff

p

A musical score for piano, featuring three staves. The top staff uses a treble clef and has a key signature of one sharp. The 44th measure begins with a rest, followed by a dynamic ff, a sixteenth-note pattern starting with a bass note, a eighth-note pattern, another bass note, and a dynamic p. The middle staff also uses a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It contains a dynamic 8va, followed by ff, a sixteenth-note pattern, a eighth-note pattern, and a dynamic p. The bottom staff uses a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. It contains a sixteenth-note pattern, a dynamic ff, a eighth-note pattern, and a dynamic p.

Musical score for piano, page 10, measures 63-68. The score consists of three staves. The top staff has a treble clef, the middle staff has a bass clef, and the bottom staff has a treble clef. Measure 63 starts with a dynamic of *p*. Measures 64-65 show a sequence of dynamics: *fz*, *pp*, and *ff*. Measures 66-67 show another sequence of dynamics: *#p*, *#p*, and *#p*. Measure 68 begins with a dynamic of *p* and ends with a dynamic of *ff*. The score includes various musical markings such as grace notes, slurs, and dynamic changes.

Musical score for piano, page 70, measures 1-5. The score consists of three staves. The top staff shows two hands playing eighth-note patterns. The middle staff shows a treble clef hand and a bass clef hand. The bottom staff shows a bass clef hand. Measure 1 starts with a forte dynamic. Measure 2 begins with a forte dynamic. Measure 3 begins with a forte dynamic. Measure 4 begins with a forte dynamic. Measure 5 begins with a forte dynamic. Measure 6 starts with a forte dynamic. Measure 7 starts with a forte dynamic. Measure 8 starts with a forte dynamic. Measure 9 starts with a forte dynamic. Measure 10 starts with a forte dynamic.

Musical score for piano solo, page 76. The score consists of three staves. The top staff is treble clef, the middle staff is bass clef, and the bottom staff is bass clef. Measure 76 starts with a rest in the treble staff, followed by a melodic line in the bass staff with dynamic *p*. The treble staff remains mostly rests. Measure 77 begins with a rest in the treble staff, followed by a melodic line in the bass staff. The middle staff has a dynamic *pp* and a trill instruction. The bottom staff shows harmonic bass notes. Measures 78-79 show a melodic line in the bass staff with dynamic *p*.

85

93

99

(8va)

*f*

*f*

*f*

104

*loco*

*dimin.*

*pp*

*p*

111

p

ff

117

pp

p

123

Musical score page 56, measures 123-128. The score consists of five staves. The top two staves are blank. The third staff (treble clef) has six measures of eighth-note patterns with various accidentals. The fourth staff (bass clef) has six measures of quarter notes with bassoon slurs. The fifth staff (bass clef) has six measures of eighth-note patterns with bassoon slurs.

129

Musical score page 56, measures 129-134. The score consists of five staves. The top two staves have measures starting with quarter notes and dynamics *p* and *pp*. The third staff (treble clef) has six measures of eighth-note patterns with dynamics *pp*. The fourth staff (bass clef) has six measures of quarter notes with bassoon slurs. The fifth staff (bass clef) has six measures of eighth-note patterns with bassoon slurs, ending with a measure number 8.

136

*8va*

*ff*      *ff*      *pp*

*ff*      *ff*      *pp*

143

*fz*

*cresc.*      *fz*

*loco*

*pp*      *p*      *cresc.*      *f*

*fz*

150

calando      a tempo

150

calando      a tempo

156

156

ff      ff

8va -

ff      ff

163

(8va) - loco

*p*

169

*p*

176

*p*

*8va----- loco*

*pp*

*p*

182

*pizz.*

*fz*

*pizz.*

*cresc.*

*f*

*arco*

*p*

188

This section contains three staves of musical notation. The top staff uses treble clef, the middle staff bass clef, and the bottom staff bass clef. Measure 188 starts with a dynamic ***ff***. Measure 189 begins with a dynamic ***ff***, followed by a dynamic ***p***. Measure 190 begins with a dynamic ***ff***. Measures 191 and 192 show eighth-note patterns with various accidentals.

194

This section contains three staves of musical notation. The top staff uses treble clef, the middle staff bass clef, and the bottom staff bass clef. Measure 194 consists of sustained notes. Measures 195-197 show eighth-note patterns with dynamics ***ff***. Measure 198 begins with a dynamic ***ff***. Measure 199 starts with a dynamic ***ff*** and includes a dynamic marking *staccato*.

201

(8va)

207

214

*p*

*p*

*pp*

calando

*p*

*p*

calando

222

*p* dolce con espressione

pizz.

a tempo

(8va) - 1

*pp*

*f*

a tempo

*f*

230

*(8va)*

*ff* arco *pp* *p*

*ff* *pp* *p*

*ff* *pp* *p*

239

*f* *ff*

*8va-* *ff* *f* *ff* *f*

*loco* *ff* *f*

*ff* *f*

247

dim.

*pp*

dim.

*ppp calando*

dim.

*ppp calando*

254

ritenuto

Tempo primo

*ffz ff*

*p*

*ffz ff*

*p*

*8va-*

*ff*

*pp*

*loco*

*8va-----*

*ff*

*p*

262

(8va) - 1      loco

*p*

*pp*

*pp*

269

*fz ff*

*fz ff*

*fz ff*

*loco*

*8va*

Musical score for piano, page 274, showing three staves of music. The top staff uses a treble clef, the middle staff a bass clef, and the bottom staff a bass clef. Measure 1 starts with a dynamic *p*. Measures 2-3 show eighth-note patterns with a dynamic *cresc.*. Measures 4-5 show sixteenth-note patterns with dynamics *f* and *p*. Measures 6-7 show eighth-note patterns with a dynamic *cresc.*. Measures 8-9 show sixteenth-note patterns with dynamics *f* and *p*. The bottom staff shows eighth-note patterns throughout, with dynamics *p*, *cresc.*, *f*, and *p*.

Musical score for orchestra and piano, page 279. The score consists of three systems of music. The top system features two staves: treble and bass. The middle system features two staves: treble and bass. The bottom system features two staves: treble and bass. Various musical markings are present, including dynamic changes (e.g., *tr*, *pizz.*, *fz*, *p*), articulations (e.g., accents, slurs), and performance instructions (e.g., bowing, fingerings).

284

8va -

*ff*      *pp*      *ff*

*ff*      *pp*      *ff*

290

(8va)

*p*

*ff*

296

*(8va)*

*fz*   *ff*   *p*   *cresc.*

*fz*   *ff*   *p*

*ff*   *p*

*ff*   *p*

302

*ff*

*cresc.*   *ff*   *con fuoco*

*cresc.*   *ff*   *con fuoco*

*cresc.*   *ff*   *con fuoco*

308

(8va)

loco

p

p

314

ff

ff

cresc.

ff

ff

Fine

## Hermann Berens

Berättelsen om Hermann Berens liv och verksamhet visar i det lilla vilken betydelse förbindelserna med tyskt musikliv under lång tid hade för musikodlingen i Sverige. Åtskilliga musiker rörde sig mellan länderna – och man kan till och med tänka sig att tyskan var ett fullt gångbart språk i Stockholms centrala musikkretsar.

Hermann Berens föddes 1826 i Hamburg. Han fick sin inledande musikutbildning av fadern Carl Berens, flöjtist och tonsättare, som fick sin huvudsakliga bärning som militär musikledare. Hermann Berens måste ha utvecklats till en skicklig pianist redan i unga år, eftersom han vid 19 års ålder gjorde vida turnéer med den italienska operasångerska Marietta Alboni.

Den ambulerande tillvaron som pianist bör ha fortsatt, även om källorna tiger. 21 år gammal kom han hur som helst till Stockholm med en pianokvintett med idel tyska medlemmar. Ensemblen gjorde ett begränsat antal framträdanden, innan den splittrades.

Hermann Berens anställdes ganska snart som musicalisk informator på Falkenå säteri, sydväst om Örebro. Där undervisade han familjens tre döttrar – den äldsta dottern, Mathilda, skulle bli hans hustru. Från informatorstjänsten i Falkenå var det inte långt till Örebro, där han 1849 fick tjänsten som regementets musicaliske ledare, således samma slags arbete som fadern hade. I Örebro deltog den unge pianisten och gode sångaren också livligt i stadens musikliv.

1860 flyttade Berens med sin familj till Stockholm, där han anlitades som kapellmästare vid Mindre teatern. Det uppdraget innebar också att förse uppsättningarna med musik. Han fick därutöver uppdraget att leda elevorkestern vid Musikaliska akademiens undervisningsverk, det som senare blev Musikkonservatoriet. Senare blev han lärare i komposition och instrument, utnämnd till professor 1868. 1863 blev han kapellmästare vid Dramatiska teatern.

Hermann Berens musicaliska produktion är både omfattande och varierad. En stor del av verken skrevs inför bestämda framförandetillfällen: kammarmusik inför salongskvällar, skådespelsmusik inför teaterpremiärer. Eftersom han fick många verk publicerade, kan man också tänka sig att förläggare beställde musik av Berens. Merparten av hans produktion skrevs därför med ivriga användare väntande utanför dörren.

Verken vittnar om en tekniskt kunnig upphovsman med goda insikter i tidens musicaliska språk. Fastän han levde större delen av sitt liv i Sverige, har hans musik knappast svensk eller nordisk färg, utan är i stället starkt anknuten till uppväxtens musicalmiljöer. Hans förmåga att anpassa sina kompositioner efter den aktuella genren måste också nämnas som kännetecken.

Han avled i Stockholm 1880.

# Gesellschafts-Quartette

Fyrhändig pianomusik utgjorde ett gängse inslag i 1800-talets vardagsrum och salonger – en umgängesform lika mycket som ett musikaliskt medium. I sina *Gesellschafts-Quartette* från 1850- och 1860-talen kombinerade Hermann Berens detta hemmusicerandets fyrhändiga piano med en violin och en cello till en ensemble som kan betraktas som en pianotrio med extra fyllig pianostämma. Det rör sig alltså om kvartetter där fyra musiker spelar på tre instrument. Benämningen ”Gesellschafts-Quartett” för denna verktyp, som tycks sakna såväl föregångare som efterföljare, torde vara Berens egen uppfinding. På svenska används ibland översättningen ”sällskapskvartetter”, en term som fanns i svensk press även på Berens tid.

Sättringen för fyrhändigt piano, violin och cello är ovanlig men förekom under 1800-talet stundom i salongsstycken och arrangemang av symfonier. I Berens fall rör det sig om storskaliga sonatkompositioner, formmässigt i linje med Beethovens, Schuberts och Mendelssohns frysatsiga pianotrior. Stilistiskt anknyter musiken till den samtida kretsen av Leipzig-tonsättare. Där finns drag som kan uppfattas som Mendelssohn- eller Schumann-artade, framförallt i de tre senare kvartetterna.

## Gesellschafts-Quartett nr 1

Berens var 25 år gammal då *Gesellschafts-Quartett* nr 1 annonserades till försäljning i januari 1852. Han hade då vistats i Sverige i lite drygt fyra år. Kompositionen är tillägnad assessor N.G. Dahlgren som var engagerad i kulturlivet i Örebro där tonsättaren var bosatt under mer än ett decennium. Det är den mest klassicistiskt utformade av de fyra kvartetterna. Det är också den enda som har en menuett som tredje sats – ett bakåtblickande snarare än ett progressivt val av den unge konstnären.

I musiken finns enhetlighet och konsekvens. Huvud- och sidotemat i det inledande allegrot är besläktade genom att de delar en rytmisk cell (punkterad fjärdedel + tre åttondelar) samt konturen av en treklang (t. 1 och t. 48). Rörelseriktningen är dock omvänt: I det första fallet utmejslar tonerna en bruten treklang uppåt, i det andra en treklang i nedåtgående rörelse.

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# Kritisk kommentar

## Erstes Gesellschafts-Quartett, op. 23

Den tryckta utgåvan av "Verlag von Aug. Cranz in Hamburg" utgör verkets enda källa. Den är publicerad under 1800-talets mitt (1850-60?) och omfattar stämmorna. Utifrån dessa har partituret samlats och utarbetats för denna nyutgåva. Återställningstecken, staccato, dynamik och legatobåge har rättats och tillagts efter modell. I den fjärde satsen har överflödiga dynamiktecken och korstecken borttagits. Nedan listas de ställen som kräver extra kommentarer.

### Sats 1: Allegro

Takt	Stämma	Aug. Cranz (1850-60?)	Lev. Musikarv	Kommentar
20	Violino			Samma rytm i frasens avslut som temats frasering och som i piano primo i samma takt.
22	Violino			Violinens nedåtgående rörelse har här fått en annan frasering än i tidigare fraser och i piano primo i samma takt (). Nyutgåvan respekterar det och musikerna får själva bestämma hur det ska spelas.
29	Primo			Ihopbalkade åttodelar såsom övriga stämmor i samma takt.
174, 178	Violino			Samma rytmgruppering som i tidigare gruppering och frasering, samt som cellon.

### Sats 3: Menuetto-Trio

Takt	Stämma	Aug. Cranz (1850-60?)	Lev. Musikarv	Kommentar
123	Secondo	E	D	Den andra tonen i taktens andra triol: tonhöjd D i stället för E (såsom i takt 115).

124	Primo	C-E	E-G	Taktens sista åttondel i högerhanden: tonhöjderna E-G i stället för C-E (som vänsterhanden och såsom i takt 116).
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#### Sats 4: Allegro commodo

Takt	Stämma	Aug. Cranz (1850-60?)	Lev. Musikarv	Kommentar
44	Primo			Legatobåge tillagd i vänsterhanden på motivet.
243	Secondo			Åttondel ersatt med fjärdedel i vänsterhanden (såsom i takt 139).
267- 268	Violoncello			Legatobåge förlängd över hela motivet (såsom violinen i samma takter).
306-7, 310-11	Primo	>	> >	Accenter förtydligade för båda händer.
311	Violoncello	 >	 > >	Accent tillagd på det andra pulsslaget (såsom i de övriga stämmorna).

# Hermann Berens

The story of Hermann Berens' life and career amounts to a microcosm of the long-lasting importance of German connections for Swedish music. A fair number of musicians moved back and forth between the two countries, and German may actually have been a perfectly viable lingua franca with Stockholm's inner music circles.

Hermann Berens was born in Hamburg in 1826. He received his first music education at the hands of his father, Carl Berens, flautist and composer, who worked mainly as a military director of music. Hermann Berens must have developed into a skilful pianist in early years, because at the tender age of 19 he went on extensive concert tours with the Italian opera singer Marietta Alboni.

His ambulatory existence as a pianist probably continued, even though the sources tell us nothing about it. Be this as it may, at the age of 21 he arrived in Stockholm together with an all-German piano quintet which gave a limited number of performances before splitting up.

Hermann Berens was quite soon taken on as music tutor at Falkenå Säteri, a manorial estate to the southwest of Örebro, where he taught the three daughters of the family, the eldest of whom, Matilda, later became his wife. From the Falkenå tutorship it was but a short step to Örebro, where in 1849 he was appointed regimental director of music – following in his father's footsteps. The young pianist, who was also blessed with a good singing voice, played a very active part in the town's music-making.

In 1860 Berens and his family moved to Stockholm, where he was engaged as orchestral conductor at the theatre Mindre teatern. His duties included the writing of incidental music. In addition, he was given charge of the student orchestra at the educational institution of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music, later to become the Royal Conservatory of Music. He eventually became a composition and instrumental teacher, and in 1868 was made a professor. In 1863 he became principal conductor at the Royal Opera.

The music output of Hermann Berens is both copious and varied. Many of his compositions were occasional pieces: chamber music for salon soirées, incidental music for theatrical first nights. Given that many of his works were published, he may well have received commissions from music publishers. Most of his output, therefore, was written with keen users eagerly waiting at the door.

The compositions testify to a technically proficient author with a good insight into the musical language of his time. Even though most of his life was spent in Sweden, his music can hardly be ascribed a Swedish or Nordic tinge, but is instead closely tied to the musical environments of his formative years. His capacity for adapting his compositions to the relevant genre is another characteristic deserving of mention.

Hermann Berens was elected to membership of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music in 1864. He died in Stockholm in 1880.

# Gesellschafts-Quartette

Piano duets were a staple ingredient of the drawing rooms and salons of the 19th century – as much a form of social life as a musical medium. In his *Gesellschafts-Quartette*, written in the 1850s and 1860s, Hermann Berens combined this domestic piano duet with a violin and a cello, forming what could be termed a piano trio with a reinforced piano part. Here, then, we have quartets with four players on three instruments. The name ‘Gesellschafts-Quartett’ as applied to this type of composition, which seems to have neither precursors nor successors, was probably coined by Berens himself. In Swedish, this is sometimes rendered as ‘sällskapskvartetter’, a term also current in the Swedish press in Berens’ day.

The combination of piano duet, violin and cello is unusual but in the 19th century sometimes occurred in drawing room pieces and arrangements of symphonies. In Berens’ case we are looking at large-scale sonata compositions, similar in form to the piano trios in four movements by Beethoven, Schubert and Mendelssohn. Stylistically this music relates to the contemporary circle of Leipzig composers, and the three later quartets especially have what can be perceived as touches of Mendelssohn or Schumann.

## Gesellschafts-Quartett no. 1

Berens was 25 years old when *Gesellschafts-Quartett* no. 1 was released in January 1852. He had then been living in Sweden for just over four years. The composition is dedicated to Assessor (puisne judge) N. G. Dahlgren, a leading light in the cultural life of Örebro, where the composer lived for more than a decade. This is the most classically cast of the four quartets, and the only one having a minuet as its third movement – a retrospective rather than a progressive choice by the young artist.

This music has both unity and consistency. The main and secondary themes of the introductory allegro are related in that they share a rhythmic cell (dotted crotchet + three quavers) and the contour of a triad (bars 1 and 48), but they are in contrary motion: in the first instance the notes carve a broken ascending triad, while in the second we have a descending triad.

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