

# Montgomery Philharmonic

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## Montgomery Philharmonic 2014 - 2015 Concert Season – SINGULARITY

Chamber Music – Sunday, June 7, 2015

Ravel - String Quartet (1903) | Nielsen – Quintet for Winds | Spohr – Nonet | Arnold – Quintet for Brass

### About Louis Spohr –

**Louis Spohr**, born Ludwig Spohr, was a German composer, violinist, and conductor. Highly regarded during his lifetime, Spohr composed ten symphonies, ten operas, eighteen violin concerti, four clarinet concerti, four oratorios, and various works for small ensemble.

His music falls between the Classical and Romantic periods in music and fell into obscurity after his death.

Spohr's musical inspiration came from his mother, a gifted singer and pianist, and his father, a gifted flutist. He studied the violin with a local violinist named Dufour, who recognized Spohr's talent as a violinist and composer and persuaded his parents to send him to Brunswick for better instruction. At 15, after his failed concert tour to Hamburg, it was necessary for him to ask Duke Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand of Brunswick for financial help. A successful concert at the court impressed the duke so much that he engaged Spohr as a chamber musician. In 1802, through the good offices of the duke, Spohr became the pupil of Franz Eck, who asked him to accompany him on a concert tour to St. Petersburg. Eck retrained Spohr's violin technique, and in 1805 Spohr became concertmaster at the court of Gotha. It was there that he met his first wife, Dorette, who was a harpist and pianist. They were married for 28 years.

It is known that Spohr practiced with Beethoven at his home and also did some composing while there. We do not know whether or not Beethoven gave Spohr any advice about composing, but you can hear Beethoven's influence on Spohr's music. As a conductor, Spohr was one of the first to stand before an orchestra using a baton. He conducted opera in Vienna, Frankfurt, and Kassel for more than 30 years.

**Born:** April 5, 1784, Braunschweig, Germany

**Died:** October 22, 1859, Kassel, Germany

**Compositions:** 2 operas – Jessonda and Faust, 9 symphonies, 18 violin concerti, 2 string quartets, several miscellaneous chamber works

**Parents:** Juliane Ernestine Louise Henke, Karl Heinrich Spohr

**Spouse:** Marianne Pfeiffer (m. 1836–1892), Dorette Schneidler (m. 1806–1834)

### Louis Spohr – *Nonet*, Opus 31 (1813)

The Spohr Nonet was created in 1813 for the wealthy amateur Viennese violinist Johann Tost. Tost played in Haydn's Esterházy Orchestra and commissioned several works in the 1780s for string quartets and quintets by Haydn and Mozart. The Nonet had only a small reference relating to this chamber music tradition. Tost commissioned a series of chamber works from Spohr, for which he secured the right to exclusive performance during the first two years before the compositions were given to a publisher to print. Granting permission for exclusive performances was a new way of commissioning, which intrigued Spohr. The slightly bewildered Spohr was given a note that said, "I would like two things. First, I want to be invited to Music Festivals, in which you will present your compositions and second, I am hoping to possess these compositions for exclusive performance rights so I might be able to spread them among music lovers so that I can build them into a business for my benefit."

Spohr's harmonies and timbres are novel and fascinating. At the beginning of the Adagio, he uses the lower strings on the instruments, similar to beginnings in works by Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Brahms. Here Spohr developed a new sound, which was the Romantic sound. The compositional mastery of his Nonet is undisputed; each instrument has a solo and at the same time is treated as a voice in the ensemble.

One peculiarity of each movement is noted here. The first movement is in sonata form and modulates; the final movement carries this further with its surprising modulations and fugato. The scherzo, in which the Lower Saxony Spohr has inserted Viennese Ländler melodies, presents in the two trios. The strings and winds are in opposition to each other. In the second trio, Spohr gave his tendency to extreme chromaticism free rein. The highly romantic theme of the Adagio is composed expressively in dialogue between strings and winds, and the finale has the lighter tone of a clean sweep in the style of Italian opera.

**Instrumentation** – flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, violin, viola, cello, double bass

### Artifact –

[http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/8/8e/IMSLP60684-PMLP40290-Spohr\\_Nonett\\_score.pdf](http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/8/8e/IMSLP60684-PMLP40290-Spohr_Nonett_score.pdf) - Full Score

<http://www.spohr-museum.de/index.html> - Spohr Museum – Kassel, Germany

### iTunes Links –

Spohr: Nonet & Octet - The Nash Ensemble

Spohr, L.: Nonet, Op. 31 - Clementi, M.: Nonetto, Woo 30-31 - Mozart, W.A.: Symphony No. 35 (Arr. for Chamber Ensemble) - Persius Ensemble

Spohr: Nonetto in F Major, Op. 31 - Martinu: Nonetto (1959) - Wolfgang Schulz, Hansjörg Schellenberger, Karl Leister, Milan Turkovic, Günter Högner, Gerhart Hetzel, Wolfram Christ, Georg Faust & Alois Posch

### Amazon.com Links –

Louis Spohr: Nonet in F major, Op. 31; Octet in E major, Op. 32

Nonets for Wind & String Instruments

NONET OP31 STUDY SCORE (Edition Eulenburg)

### YouTube Video Links –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKlpZA45OII>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trJJ4IpOdbS>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nDsaalS1VU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zi-G5Xd6x18>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drBnGfPCNE0>