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John, John, John by John Chesworth and John Broughton, published by Elliott & Thompson, London, in 1860. "John, John, John" is a musical composition by Christopher Isherwood (1904-1986), for tenor, alto and piano. Aptly named, the piece is in the key of E flat major. As Isherwood recalls, it was written in 1930, and he (it could be him, it might even be his score) wrote it while visiting a hospital for tubercular patients in Stockholm in 1930. However, the thought of writing about death in a time when the poet is still young does rather put the thoughts of a young person in to perspective, John tells us. The music (which closes the first section) was written in an atmosphere of deep gloom. The piece itself is peculiar in its sense of fun and charm. It reminds one of the traditional Italian contradanza form, yet it contains nothing of the familiar sing-a-long. But in its shaping of mood and the special sound of the instruments, it transcends that simple formula. The piece is in a major key and is ideal for a performance by a group of three or four players. John, John, John was written in 1932 and may be read in several ways: as a lament on an attractive young girl who, during John's short life, was never to be his wife; an ironic criticism of an ambivalence within society, where, in spite of John, love is still on the order of the day; as a kind of romantic fantasy, and so on. However, this is difficult to determine from a musical analysis. In *Music and the Mind: The Growth of Music Through the Nineteenth Century* (1980) Richard Taruskin observes: In an essay on the composer Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, 1812-1893, he puts the point with much fervor: "Those who think of Tchaikovsky as a special case of unsuccessful genius must either be indifferent to nineteenth-century music or want to be indifferent to nineteenth-century music. It is a commonplace that in the realm of music composition, the nineteenth century, except for a few frivolous successes such as Tchaikovsky's, is a period of failure. Why should this be? Just consider some of the most outstanding composers: Shostakovich is a stick in the mud, a servile composer who fashions music by rote, a mediocre mel
