

NAXOS

DVOŘÁK

Piano Trios • 1

Nos. 3 and 4 'Dumky'

The Tempest Trio



Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Piano Trio No. 3 in F minor, Op. 65 · Piano Trio No. 4 in E minor ‘Dumky’, Op. 90

Antonín Dvořák was born in 1841, the son of a butcher and innkeeper in the village of Nelahozeves, near Kralupy in Bohemia, and some forty miles north of Prague. It was natural that he should at first have been expected to follow the family trade, as the eldest son. His musical abilities, however, soon became apparent and were encouraged by his father, who in later years abandoned his original trade, to earn something of a living as a zither player. After primary schooling he was sent to lodge with an uncle in Zlonice and was there able to acquire the necessary knowledge of German and improve his abilities as a musician, hitherto acquired at home in the village band and at church. Further study of German and of music at Kamenice, a town in northern Bohemia, led to his admission, in 1857, to the Prague Organ School, where he studied for the following two years.

On leaving the Organ School, Dvořák earned his living as a viola-player in a band under the direction of Karel Komzák, an ensemble that was to form the nucleus of the Czech Provisional Theatre Orchestra, established in 1862. Four years later Smetana was appointed conductor at the theatre, where his operas *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia* and *The Bartered Bride* had already been performed. It was not until 1871 that Dvořák resigned from the orchestra, devoting himself more fully to composition, as his music began to attract favourable local attention. In 1873 he married a singer from the chorus of the theatre and in 1874 became organist of the church of St Adalbert. During this period he continued to support himself by private teaching, while busy on a series of compositions that gradually became known to a wider circle.

Further recognition came to Dvořák in 1874, when his application for an Austrian government award brought his music to the attention of Brahms and the critic Eduard Hanslick in Vienna. The granting of this award for five consecutive years was of material assistance. It was through this contact that Brahms, impressed by Dvořák's *Moravian Duets* entered for the award of 1877, was able to arrange for their publication by Simrock, who commissioned a further

work, *Slavonic Dances*, for piano duet. The success of these publications introduced Dvořák's music to a much wider public, for which it held some exotic appeal. As his reputation grew, there were visits to Germany and to England, where he was always received with greater enthusiasm than might initially have been accorded a Czech composer in Vienna.

In 1883 Dvořák had rejected a tempting proposal that he should write a German opera for Vienna. At home he continued to contribute to Czech operatic repertoire, an important element in re-establishing national identity. The invitation to take up a position in New York was another matter. In 1891 he had become professor of composition at Prague Conservatory and in the summer of the same year he was invited to become director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. With the backing of Jeanette Thurber and her husband, this institution was intended to foster American music, hitherto dominated by musicians from Europe or largely trained there. Whatever the ultimate success or failure of the venture, Dvořák's contribution was seen as that of providing a blue-print for American national music, following the example of Czech national music, which owed so much to him. The musical results of Dvořák's time in America must lie chiefly in his own music, notably in his *Symphony 'From the New World'*, his *American Quartet*, *American Quintet* and his *Violin Sonata*, works that rely strongly on the European tradition that he had inherited, while making use of melodies and rhythms that might be associated in one way or another with America. By 1895 Dvořák was home for good, resuming work at the Prague Conservatory, of which he became director in 1901. His final works included a series of symphonic poems and two more operas, to add to the nine he had already composed. He died in Prague in 1904.

Dvořák's chamber music includes fourteen string quartets, three string quintets, a string sextet, two piano quintets, two piano quartets and six piano trios, the first two of which are lost or were destroyed by the composer. The *Piano Trio in F minor*, Op. 65, was written during the first months of 1883, the year of his orchestral *Scherzo*

capriccioso, written in April and May, and the *Hussite Overture*, written in late summer for the celebratory opening of the Czech National Theatre in Prague in November. Just as the earlier *Piano Trio in G minor* had been written after the death of his eldest daughter, so the *F minor Piano Trio* came shortly after the death of the composer's mother. The work is strongly felt, while seeming to owe much to Brahms in its form, rhythmic interplay, textures and melodic invention. The serious intention is evident at the outset, as violin and cello embark on the first theme, before the entry of the piano, which restates the theme in more grandiose form. The second subject is introduced by the cello, in the key of D flat major, to be expanded and darkened before the central development, with its shifts of key and initial reminiscence of the first theme, which returns emphatically, in its original key, to start the formal recapitulation. Here the material is further varied, before the final *Poco più mosso, quasi vivace*. The second movement is a *Scherzo* in C sharp minor. The folk-type melody moves briefly to E major, with the piano at first accompanied by the strings, before they take up the theme. The *Trio* section is in D flat major, the enharmonic tonic major key, and offers the kind of change of mood and keyboard sonorities familiar from Brahms. The expressive *Poco adagio*, in A flat major, opens with a cello melody, harmonically tinged with melancholy, but the mood is soon lightened, as the violin introduces a tenderly lyrical melody, helped by the cello, both supported by the piano. There is a change of mood and key, as G sharp minor gives way for a moment to B major. The principal thematic material returns in the final section of the movement, both principal melodic elements now in the tonic key. The *Finale*, in the rhythm of a Czech *furiant*, returns to F minor, its first theme followed by a more tranquil C sharp minor. The principal theme serves as a frame-work for further contrasting episodes, before a moment of tranquillity, as the music resolves into the major key, dying away gradually, before the final burst of emphatic nervous energy.

The *Dumky Trio* was started in November 1890 and completed the following year on 12th February. 1891 brought the first performance of the *Requiem*, in London, Dvořák's acceptance of the position of professor of orchestration and composition at the Prague Conservatory, on the duties of

which he now embarked, and a visit to Cambridge to receive the degree of Doctor of Music. The *dumka* was in origin a Ukrainian lament. The word is a diminutive of *duma*, a narrative ballad, with a plural, *dumky*. Dvořák had first used the word *dumka* as the title of a piano piece in 1876 and he went on to use the *dumka* in his *Slavonic Dances*, *String Sextet*, *String Quartet in E flat* and *Piano Quintet in A*, Op. 81. His best known use of the form, however, comes in his *Dumky Trio*, a set of six *dumky*, in varied keys, generally starting with a melancholy first section, followed by an alternating section in lively contrast. The work, which won great popularity, was first performed in Prague on 11th April by the composer, with the cellist Hanuš Wihan, his colleague at the Conservatory and collaborator, and the violinist Ferdinand Lachner, who joined him in the following year for a concert-tour of Moravia which included the *Dumky Trio* in its programmes. The form of the work is original in its presentation of six movements of generally similar form, with contrast in the choice of keys. The first *dumka* starts dramatically with a cello lament, taken up by the violin, before the intervention of a lively and cheerful dance, displaced for the moment by the return of the music of the opening section. A sadder mood returns in the second *dumka*, in which the cello again has initial prominence, before a more lyrical tenderness intrudes, followed by a livelier dance of increasing energy. A short cello cadenza brings back the slower music of the opening, with its light and shade, and the *dumka* ends with the vigour of the livelier element. There is a further shift of key for the third movement, the *Trio* started in E minor, with a second movement in C sharp minor. The third movement begins in a gently lyrical A major, to be interrupted by a rapider section in the minor, before all ends in tranquility. A D minor march begins the fourth movement, leading to a capricious *Scherzo*, at first in F major and then in D major, before the return of the opening mood and key. The fifth movement is a splendidly rhythmic E flat major *Allegro*, its emphatic conclusion followed by a C minor closing movement of due contrast. Here its slow introductory section leads to a wild and vigorous dance, with which it alternates, allowing the latter the last word.

Keith Anderson

The Tempest Trio

Ilya Kaler, Violin • Amit Peled, Cello • Alon Goldstein, Piano



Photo: Kopicki Photography

Combining technical mastery, expressive depth and performance experience, pianist Alon Goldstein, violinist Ilya Kaler and cellist Amit Peled have joined forces to form one of the most exciting trios on the international scene. Each virtuoso member of the ensemble has a successful solo career; together, they bring vitality to the concert stage with their dynamic musical interplay and collaborative spirit. After only a few seasons as a trio the group has already been compared to the legendary "Million Dollar Trio" of Arthur Rubinstein, Gregor Piatigorsky and Jascha Heifetz. The Tempest Trio has performed in cities throughout the US, Europe, Israel and Asia. In 2010 the ensemble presented the complete Schumann *Trios* at the renowned Seattle Chamber Music Festival and was immediately invited back the following year to play the complete Brahms *Trios*. The trio has performed Beethoven's *Triple Concerto* to critical acclaim on numerous occasions and will soon release its recording of the piece. As committed pedagogues, the members of the Tempest Trio all teach at prestigious universities and summer festivals around the world and share their knowledge, experience and joy of music-making through intensive educational residencies, which they offer during each season.

www.tempesttrio.com

Dvořák's four surviving *Piano Trios* are cornerstones of the repertory. *No. 3* was completed early in 1883, shortly after the death of the composer's mother. Though there are inevitably moments tinged with sadness, as in the poignant third movement, there is also tender lyricism and strong nervous energy. Formed of six *dumky* (the *dumka* was in origin a Ukrainian lament), the '*Dumky*' *Trio* is one of Dvořák's most original and popular works. Offering a seemingly endless variety of mood and texture, each movement incorporates a slow and melancholy section alternating with one which is faster, dance-like and cheerful.

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Piano Trio No. 3 in F minor, Op. 65, B. 130 **41:20**

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| 1 | I. Allegro ma non troppo – Poco più mosso, quasi vivace | 13:46 |
| 2 | II. Allegro grazioso – Meno mosso | 6:41 |
| 3 | III. Poco adagio | 10:53 |
| 4 | IV. Finale: Allegro con brio – Meno mosso – Vivace | 10:00 |

Piano Trio No. 4 in E minor 'Dumky', Op. 90, B. 166 **31:43**

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| 5 | I. Lento maestoso – Allegro vivace, quasi doppio movimento –
Tempo I – Allegro molto | 4:21 |
| 6 | II. Poco adagio – Vivace non troppo | 7:17 |
| 7 | III. Andante – Vivace non troppo – Andante – Allegretto | 6:24 |
| 8 | IV. Andante moderato (quasi tempo di marcia) –
Allegretto scherzando – Meno mosso – Allegro – Moderato | 4:48 |
| 9 | V. Allegro – | 4:09 |
| 10 | VI. Lento maestoso – Vivace, quasi doppio movimento –
Lento – Vivace | 4:43 |

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from 26th to 29th May, 2013 • Producers: Norbert Kraft and Bonnie Silver
Engineer and editor: Norbert Kraft • Piano technician: Mary Schwendeman
Booklet notes: Keith Anderson • Cover photo: Kopicki Photography