

# DVOŘÁK

## Piano Trios • 2

### Nos. 1 and 2

## The Tempest Trio



## Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

### Piano Trio No. 1 in B flat major, Op. 21 • Piano Trio No. 2 in G minor, Op. 26

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 blueprint 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 Sonatina*, 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 *Piano Trio in B flat major, Op. 21* was written in the spring or early summer of 1875, the first of his four surviving works in this form. It was subsequently revised, either before or after the first public performance in February 1877 by the pianist Karl Slavkovský, violinist František Ondříček and cellist Alois Sládek. The first

movement, in the expected tripartite classical form of exposition, development and recapitulation, offers a broadly flowing first theme to which the second, introduced by the piano after earlier indications of its approach, provides a contrast. The central development explores this material, before its modified return in recapitulation. The G minor slow movement hints at melancholy, its principal theme stated by the piano and taken up in succession by the cello and the violin. An A major section, leading to a version of the material in F sharp minor, finds its way back to the original key for a conclusion of great serenity. There is a further change of key, now to E flat major, for the graceful *Scherzo*, with its B major *Trio*. There is a gradual return to the key of B flat major for the principal theme of the energetic final movement, with its exciting conclusion, the necessary counterbalance in form and weight to the first.

The *Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 26* was written in January 1876, a period of sadness, after the death in infancy of the first of Dvořák's daughters. The same year saw the composition of the *Stabat Mater* and the *Piano Concerto in G minor*. The work was first performed in June 1879 in Turnov by the composer with the violinist

Ferdinand Lachner, his companion on later concert tours, and the cellist Alois Neruda. A brief introduction leads to the lyrical and characteristic first subject and an equally appealing secondary theme. The music grows in poignant intensity, to subside before the exposition is repeated. The strongly marked chords with which the movement had begun find a place in the central development, as they must in the final recapitulation. The cello is entrusted with the first statement of the meditative theme that dominates the E flat major slow movement. This is followed by the lightly scored G minor *Scherzo*, with its theme announced by the violin and imitated by the piano, then to be heard in canon, the two string instruments at first answering the piano. The cello offers a moment of relaxation before the canon and original pace are resumed. To this the central G major *Trio* provides a contrast. The vigorous *Finale* opens with strongly marked chords, an echo of the first movement, soon moving to the key of G minor. A final G major brings a triumphant and emphatic conclusion.

Keith Anderson

## The Tempest Trio

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



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 recent years the ensemble presented the complete Schumann, Brahms and Dvořák Trio cycles at the renowned Seattle Chamber Music Festival and the Four Arts Society in Palm Beach as well as New York's Town Hall. The trio has performed Beethoven's *Triple Concerto* to critical acclaim in Chicago, Washington DC, Palm Beach and Rogue Valley Oregon. They have been ensemble in residence at the Heifetz International Music Festival as well as Cape Cod Chamber Music Festival. 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. The Tempest Trio's debut recording for Naxos – *Dvořák Trios, Volume 1* (8.573279) – was selected for inclusion in the Naxos 30th Anniversary boxed set [8.503293].

[www.tempesttrio.com](http://www.tempesttrio.com)

Dvořák's four piano trios are some of the greatest examples of late 19th-century chamber music, and have remained repertoire favourites to this day. His *Piano Trio No. 1 in B flat major* incorporates melancholy, serenity and vivid excitement in equal measure, while the *Piano Trio No. 2 in G minor* though written at a time of personal tragedy for Dvořák, achieves a triumphant and emphatic conclusion. *Fanfare* said of the first volume of Trios (8.573279), 'I would urge you with special pleading to acquire this release for what may well be the best Dvořák 'Dumky' on disc ever.'

Antonín  
**DVOŘÁK**  
(1841–1904)

**Piano Trio No. 1 in B flat major, Op. 21, B. 51** **35:03**

- |          |                                   |              |
|----------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>I. Allegro molto</b>           | <b>12:29</b> |
| <b>2</b> | <b>II. Adagio molto e mesto</b>   | <b>8:59</b>  |
| <b>3</b> | <b>III. Allegretto scherzando</b> | <b>7:19</b>  |
| <b>4</b> | <b>IV. Finale: Allegro vivace</b> | <b>6:16</b>  |

**Piano Trio No. 2 in G minor, Op. 26, B. 56** **32:12**

- |          |                                      |              |
|----------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>5</b> | <b>I. Allegro moderato</b>           | <b>12:14</b> |
| <b>6</b> | <b>II. Largo</b>                     | <b>7:32</b>  |
| <b>7</b> | <b>III. Scherzo: Presto</b>          | <b>6:06</b>  |
| <b>8</b> | <b>IV. Finale: Allegro non tanto</b> | <b>6:20</b>  |

**The Tempest Trio**

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

Recorded: 5–7 October 2016 at Spencerville Seventh-day Adventist Church, Silver Spring,  
Maryland, USA • Producers: Norbert Kraft and Bonnie Silver • Engineer: Norbert Kraft  
Editor: Bonnie Silver • Piano technician: Mary Schwendeman  
Booklet notes: Keith Anderson • Cover photo: Kopicki Photography