



DVOŘÁK: PIANO TRIOS GOULD PIANO TRIO



Piano Trio in Bb, Op. 21

Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 26

Piano Trio in F minor, Op. 65

Piano Trio in E minor, Op. 90 "Dumky"



I FOREWORD

What is the object of performing any cycle of a composer's output? Certainly a feeling of completeness and a chance to put lesser known works alongside established masterpieces; but above all perhaps, it is the sense of embarking on a journey that performers can share with the composer himself – and, of course, with their listeners.

The cycle of Dvořák piano trios would seem to answer these criteria excellently. The earlier works, despite their freshness, contain plenty of profundity (particularly in their slow movements) and wonderful lyricism, proving that the great F minor and Dumky trios did not sprout from nowhere, but were a result of Dvořák's continuous development together with his life's experience.

We hope that having listened to these four works, our listeners will feel that they have completed a fascinating journey of emotional experience, as have we recording them.

Lucy Alice Ben

DVOŘÁK: PIANO TRIOS

CD 1

TRIO, OP. 21

[1]	Allegro molto	14'05
[2]	Adagio molto e mesto	7'54
[3]	Allegretto scherzando	6'35
[4]	Allegro vivace	6'04

TRIO IN F MINOR, OP. 65

[5]	Allegro ma non troppo	13'54
[6]	Allegretto grazioso	7'07
[7]	Poco adagio	10'30
[8]	Allegro con brio	10'26

Disc total: 76'39

CD 2

TRIO IN G MINOR, OP. 26

[1]	Allegro moderato	13'14
[2]	Largo	6'26
[3]	Scherzo, Presto	6'17
[4]	Allegro non tanto	6'14

TRIO IN E MINOR, OP. 90, "DUMKY"

[5]	Lento maestoso	4'14
[6]	Poco adagio	6'37
[7]	Andante	6'14
[8]	Andante moderato	5'16
[9]	Allegro	4'23
[10]	Lento maestoso	5'13

Disc total: 64'11

Produced and engineered by Michael Ponder
Edited by Jennifer Howells
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Photographs of Gould Piano Trio by Jake Morley
Executive producer for Champs Hill Records: Alexander Van Ingen

I DVOŘÁK: PIANO TRIOS

Antonín Dvořák (Toník to his family and friends) was born on 8 September 1841 in the Czech village of Nelahozeves, the first-born son of an inn keeper who was also the local butcher. Toník received his first violin lessons from his father, and by the age of five was able to entertain visitors at the inn with his fiddle playing. In an age before recordings or radio were available, music-making was a major source of diversion and entertainment in a rural village; even Dvořák's father had some proficiency as a zither player. One can imagine how entertaining both guests and villagers would have encouraged Dvořák to develop his improvisatory skills and distinctive melodic invention.

In his teenage years Dvořák was sent to the small town of Zlonice to study German, where he stayed with an uncle, Antonín Zdeněk. Zdeněk was sympathetic to the young Dvořák's burgeoning talent as a musician, and during those years Dvořák took lessons in viola, piano and organ. Then, against the wishes of his father – who intended his son to follow him into the butcher's trade – Dvořák, with financial support from Zdeněk, studied at the Prague Organ School. Afterwards he literally scraped his living in Prague as an orchestral violist; during that time he played in several orchestral excerpts from Wagner, whose influence became evident in his compositions both then and for some time afterwards. He also became friends with Smetana, the Czech nationalist composer who became something of a mentor.

Given his aptitude as a practical musician, it was natural that Dvořák should have composed chamber music throughout his career. As a budding composer he wrote at least two piano trios: the *Adagio* of one was performed in 1872 at an informal musical evening in the home of Ludevít Procházka, editor of a weekly music paper, and his wife the coloratura soprano Marta Resingerová.

Dvořák's fortunes improved in 1873 when a wealthy merchant hired him to accompany himself and his wife's singing, and also to teach his children the piano. This work arrived none too soon, since a few months later in November Dvořák was obliged to marry one of his pupils, Anna, already pregnant with their first child. Three months

later he took the post of organist at the St Adalbert Church, Prague. Increasingly dissatisfied by his early compositions, he destroyed several of his manuscripts – including possibly those of two piano trios of 1871, since these have been lost – and under Smetana's influence began to compose more in the Czech idiom.

In 1874 Dvořák, now a father with his first-born son Otakar, applied for the Austrian State Prize, created to assist poor and talented young artists. Dvořák submitted 15 of his compositions to the judging panel which included the eminent music critic Hanslick and the composer Brahms. Much impressed by Dvořák's music, the panel awarded him a generous grant, enabling him to devote more time to composition. His new-won confidence resulted in a five-month burst of creativity in 1875, during which he completed his G major String Quintet, four Moravian Duets (for soprano and tenor), Op. 20, the E major Serenade for Strings, the Piano Quartet in D, his masterful Fifth Symphony in F, and the first of his surviving Piano Trios, in B flat.

Dvořák's Piano Trio No. 1 was composed just before he wrote the Slavonic Dances which effectively launched his international reputation. His Piano Trio No. 1 in B flat, though, has more in common with his genial Serenade for Strings, composed in the same period, whose characteristic melodic charm is particularly recalled in the first and third movements. (One wonders, too, how much Dvořák's Trio may have influenced Brahms, whose sunny Second Symphony, composed in 1877, contains many echoes of Dvořák's work). Dvořák's relative immaturity in his handling of sonata form is evident at times in, for instance, his over-reliance of a simple sequence to get him through some modulation in the first movement's development section; but there is enough engaging melodic inventiveness to charm the listener, particularly in the quirky yet endearing polka-style third movement, whose trio section also surprises with its degree of gravity. The Piano Trio in B flat was first performed in Prague on 17 February 1877 by pianist Karel ze Slavkovský, violinist František Ondříček (who later performed as the soloist in the premiere of Dvořák's Violin Concerto) and cellist Alois Sládek. Dvořák subsequently revised this Trio, making some cuts to its finale, before it was published by Schlesinger in Berlin, 1880.

Just seven months after completing his B flat Piano Trio, Dvořák composed another in G minor, writing it in a relatively short time between 4 and 20 January 1876. The work is often said to express his grief over the death of his first-born daughter, Josefa, who had died just two days after her birth on 19 September 1875. The fact that Dvořák's work shares the same key as Smetana's Piano Trio, composed in memory of the latter's daughter, would appear to substantiate this theory. However, compared to Smetana's undoubtedly grief-filled work, Dvořák's work is quite restrained, perhaps having more in common with Mozart's famous G minor Symphony, though with rather less of the earlier work's characteristic sighing phrases. In fact Dvořák's G minor Trio is very purposeful and cogent compared to the earlier B flat Trio, serious in tone but without indulging in the kind of angst one might find in Mahler or Tchaikovsky.

The G minor was the first of Dvořák's Piano Trios to be published, in 1878 by the German firm of Bote & Bock, and Dvořák himself took the piano part in its first performance on 29 June 1879, which was held at Turnov in Northern Bohemia with the violinist Ferdinand Lachner and cellist Alois Neruda. By this time Dvořák had won an invaluable ally in Brahms, a great admirer of his music who did much to promote Dvořák's reputation outside his native Bohemia. In 1880 a concert devoted to Dvořák's music was given in Brahms's native Hamburg on 24 April, including a performance of the G minor Trio.

Dvořák enjoyed his growing success outside his native Bohemia, though he would remain defiantly proud of his Czech origins in the face of the condescension he encountered even among many of his most fervent German supporters, and by all accounts remained unspoiled by his success. Even so, his compositions grew apace in their sophistication. His growing mastery and depth of expression becomes clear in his next Piano Trio, composed in the wake of his mother's death in December 1882. He laboured mightily over this work, reworking it after an initial draft which he completed on 31 March and in all taking almost three months to complete it, in contrast to the usual two or three weeks he usually devoted to writing a chamber work.

The result is widely regarded as the finest of not only his Trios but even of all his chamber works: indeed, the Piano Trio in F minor, Op. 65 has been described by his English biographer, John Clapham, as preparing the way to his impressive Symphony No. 7 in D minor. Certainly the F minor Trio is on an ambitious scale, lasting over 40 minutes, and contains several echoes of the composer Dvořák revered above all: Beethoven. The first movement includes a theme reminiscent of the funeral march of Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony*, and there is more than a hint in the *scherzo* of the equivalent movement in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. But the overall style and rhetoric is very much that of late-nineteenth century Romanticism, with a power that matches the passion of Brahms. The third movement, by contrast, is intimate, while the *finale*, after a dramatic start, reaches an upbeat climax and after a serene episode, a briskly confident conclusion. Dvořák himself played the piano part at the work's premiere on 27 October 1883, joining the same musicians who had performed at the première of his Second Piano Trio.

If the F minor is regarded by Dvořák aficionados as the greatest of his chamber works, his final Piano Trio, the "Dumky", is certainly the best known of his four works for that ensemble. Dvořák began composing the "Dumky" *Trio* some seven years after he had finished the F minor, completing the work on 12 February 1891. It was first performed the following April with the composer at the piano, with the violinist Lachner and cellist Hanuš Wihan. It was Wihan's musicianship which had largely inspired the Trio and accordingly the cello is often given the lead (it was for Wihan that Dvořák subsequently composed one of his greatest masterpieces, the Cello Concerto).

Dvořák's final Piano Trio is his most overtly Slavic work, being based entirely on the *dumka*. The *dumka* was originally a Ukrainian musical form, said to be a form of lament, though the name is apparently derived from a Slavic word 'dumat' meaning 'to ponder, ruminate or meditate'. Dvořák unusually structures his Trio as a series of six *dumkas*, the first three played with scarcely a break, and in a sequence of related keys as if combining into a substantial first movement, while the subsequent *dumkas* serve as slow movement, *scherzo* and *finale*.

If the musical structures in this work seem simple compared to the more involved structures of Dvořák's Second and Third Piano Trios, one should not be deceived into thinking that because it is built on a simple folk "Dumky" *Trio* is in any way 'simple', certainly not in its emotional content. Consider the first *Dumka*, launching as it does with a dramatic flourish by the cello and piano before the violin makes its keening first entry. An attentive listener will realize the grief-stricken nature of this music, which makes the sudden change of mood to something more playful, even skittish, quite disconcerting. The English musicologist Donald Tovey once described this rather alarming contrast as 'an uncontrollable urge to dance on grandmother's grave'; certainly the effect is rather like grieving at a funeral immediately followed by a riotous wake. One may remember Chopin achieving a similar effect in several of his extended works such as his Ballades. Not every *dumka* movement follows such extremes of contrast, but the complexity of their emotional content is evident throughout.

This was one of the last works Dvořák completed before his famous excursion to the United States. Such was the closeness of his friendship with Brahms by then that the great composer himself proofread the "Dumky" *Trio* for publication while his friend was away in the New World.

Daniel Jaffé



Gould Piano Trio

In over twenty years together, the Gould Trio has firmly established an enviable reputation for musical integrity and imagination, which has continued to evolve since their early success in winning the Charles Hennen (Holland), Vittorio Gui (Italy) and Melbourne international chamber music competitions.

A constantly developing career reflects their musical energy, with regular tours to the USA and Europe; recent appearances including the Bath Mozart Fest, Hay-on-Wye (BBC Radio 3), and the Royal Northern College of Music and Lofoten (Norway) International Chamber Music Festivals. They enjoy planning and sharing their own chamber music festival in Corbridge, Northumberland (with clarinettist Robert Plane), their interaction between invited artists and a very loyal audience being a recipe for renewal and inspiration.

'The Goulds' are the first ensemble to record the complete cycle of Brahms' piano trios, including his two surviving early essays in the genre, and the famous clarinet and horn trios (Robert Plane and David Pyatt respectively). An endeavour close to their hearts in recent years has been to reinstate the late British Romantics in the catalogue, with Stanford, Bax and Ireland appearing on Naxos and Cyril Scott on Chandos. Their homage to Messiaen – 'Quatour pour la fin du temps' (Chandos) (in his centenary year) was described by *BBC Music Magazine* as 'the best modern account' of the work.

As well as their performances, the trio feel passionate about passing on their craft to younger aspiring musicians, working closely with students at both the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff, and at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.

Lucy Gould - violin

Lucy Gould founded the Gould Piano Trio in 1992 whilst studying at the Royal Academy of Music. Alongside her work with the trio she is also a member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and much in demand as a guest leader of many leading orchestras in the UK. She has made concerto appearances with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Bournemouth Sinfonietta and the English String Orchestra.

As a much sought-after chamber musician Lucy has collaborated with many artists, including Roger Vignoles and Leon McCawley. Her recordings include John Ireland's Violin Sonatas with Benjamin Frith for Naxos (*BBC Music Magazine* Chamber Music Choice), the premiere performance of violin works by Stanford for Naxos and the Mendelssohn Octet with Daniel Hope and colleagues from the Chamber Orchestra of Europe (Deutsche Grammophon). A CD of chamber music by Bax, including the premiere recording of the Trio for clarinet, violin and piano was shortlisted for a Gramophone Award.

Lucy has three children and lives in Cardiff, holding a teaching post at the Royal Welch College of Music and Drama.



Alice Neary - cello

Alice was the winner of the 1998 Pierre Fournier Award, and won major prizes in 2001 Leonard Rose Competition, USA and the 1997 Adam International Cello Competition, New Zealand.

Alice's performances have included concertos with the Ulster Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Israel Symphony and recitals at the Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room and Bridgewater Hall. Festival appearances include Santa Fe, Bath and City of London. She has broadcast extensively on BBC Radio 3 and NPR (USA) and recordings include the Tovey cello concerto with the Ulster Orchestra, Ireland cello sonata and Paul Patterson cello concerto.

A passionate chamber musician, Alice joined the Gould Piano trio in 2001 and has appeared as guest cellist with Nash Ensemble, Endellion and Elias string quartets.

Alice studied with Ralph Kirshbaum at Royal Northern College of Music and with Timothy Eddy, as a Fulbright scholar in USA. She teaches at the Royal College of Music and Royal Welch College of Music and Drama. She plays an Alessandro Gagliano cello of 1710.



Ben Frith - piano

Ben was encouraged by his teacher, Dame Fanny Waterman, to pursue a musical career after winning the Dudley National Piano Competition at the age of fourteen. After a Mozart Memorial Prize he was invited to play at the Aldeburgh Festival, where he shared the stage with Sir Peter Pears in Poulenc's 'Histoire de Babar'. He gained much exposure after the 1983 NFMS Award for Young Concert Artists, but his international reputation was ensured by his top prize at Busoni (Bolzano) and the Gold Medal at the Artur Schnabel Piano Masters Competition.

Ben's CDs on the Naxos label, of Field, Mendelssohn and Weber, have sold worldwide and he has been recently invited to perform again with the Hallé (Rachmaninov) and Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestras (Hummel and John Field). He has also been revisiting Israel, playing Mozart concertos with the Israel Camerata in Tel Aviv.

His versatility as both soloist, chamber musician and teacher has led to a wide-reaching musical career, taking him to many international festivals and collaborating with leading orchestras as well as major figures from the chamber music world. He lives in Sheffield and holds a teaching post at the Royal Northern College of Music.

