

smetana trio



Smetana Trio
2022-2023 Biography
Jitka Čechová (piano); Jan Talich (violin); Jan Páleníček (cello)

The Smetana Trio, founded in the year 1934 by the legendary Czech pianist Josef Páleníček, is today one of the foremost Czech ensembles. In 2014 the Smetana Trio celebrates 80th jubilee of its foundation. It can be seen frequently on leading concert stages both in the Czech Republic (Prague Spring, Janáček May, Moravian Autumn, Concentus moraviae, Malá Strana Chamber Festivities) and abroad (France, Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain, Benelux, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Japan, Brazil, USA, Canada, South Korea, Egypt).

The Smetana Trio works with leading conductors – i. a. Jiří Bělohlávek, Libor Pešek, Serge Baudo, John Axelrod, Michael Boder, Tomáš Hanus, Stanislav Vavřínek – and Czech and foreign orchestras, including, for example the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra della Svizzera italiana Lugano, the Prague Symphony Orchestra, the Prague Philharmonic, the ONPL Orchestra Nantes, the Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice, the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra Olomouc.

The Smetana Trio has made a number of recordings for Czech and international labels and has recorded regularly for Supraphon since 2000. This cooperation has brought a number of prestigious awards both at home and abroad – e.g. a CD with works by Smetana, Suk and Novák (Supraphon 2005) received prestigious awards from the French magazines *Diapason* and *Le Monde de la musique*. This recording was also chosen by the British *BBC Music Magazine* as its chamber music recording of the month in August 2005.

Another Smetana Trio recording, this time works by Dvořák (Supraphon 2006), was again voted by the *BBC Music Magazine* as the best recording of the month in September 2006 and later received the *BBC Music Magazine Chamber Award* for 2007 and also the prestigious French *Diapason D'Or*. The recording of trios by Tchaikovsky and Dvořák (Supraphon 2008) received the *BBC Chamber recording of the month* in December 2008. Other Supraphon recording project, released in autumn 2012, are complete piano trios by J. Brahms. Other recording with works by J. Brahms – 1st part of complete concertos (Double Concerto and Piano Concerto No.1 – TRIART Recording) was released in 2013 and in 2014 the Smetana Trio recorded the complete recording of trios by Shostakovich and Ravel (Supraphon 2014) – MusicWeb International – recording of the month, June 2014. In 2015 the Smetana Trio recorded the complete trios by Bohuslav Martinu, which received many international awards immediately – BBC MM Chamber Award 2017, BBC MM Recording of the month, Diapason d'Or, Sunday Times Recording of the week, TIP of the Harmonie etc.

The recording of the Smetana Trio with piano trios by Zemlinsky, Rachmaninov and Arensky (issued in March 2019) received many world awards immediately too - BBC Music Magazine Chamber Choice (May 2019) and France Musique's Disc du Jour – the 29th May 2019. The newest recording of the Smetana Trio with piano trios by Ludwig van Beethoven (issued in September 2020) receives its first world award already - BBC Music Magazine Chamber Choice December 2020).

The Smetana Trio performed many times on international stages in last times – for example in France, where the Smetana Trio very successfully cooperated with Orchestre National des Pays de la Loire conducted by John Axelrod – 7 times Triple Concerto by Beethoven for 10 000 listeners. In recent times the Smetana Trio played for many festivals and concert series in Europe, America and Africa – for example in France - Cambrai, Chalon, Nice and Aix en Provence, in England – London and many further cities of Great Britain, in Germany - München, Würzburg, Tübingen, Festival Hohenloher Kultursommer, but also in the USA, Brazil, Switzerland, Italy, France and Egypt. In 2018 the Smetana Trio mediates its art to the audience in the Czech Republic – incl. Prague Spring Festival, in England – incl. prestigious Wigmore Hall in London, in Italy, Germany, Rumania and again in the USA – this time in 12 cities for example on renowned stages in Washington, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Diego. In 2019/2020 the Smetana Trio continues in its successful tour in the USA and Canada and plays many concerts in the Czech Republic, England – incl. the new concert at the Wigmore Hall, in Italy, Switzerland, Spain and South America. During the world pandemic in 2020 and 2021 the Smetana Trio recorded 2CD to celebrate the 200th anniversary of L. van Beethovena, this double cd attracted the immediate attention of domestic and world media. The BBC Music Magazine has chosen the recording as recording of the month (Choice of the month – December 2020). After a forced covid break when the Smetana Trio filmed or broadcast a series of video streams, the Smetanas play on the Czech and world stages again. Since the start of season 2021/22 the Smetana trio performed on many Czech and foreign concert stages and festivals, in addition to others Terras sem sombra in Portugal, concerts in Italy, Germany, Spain, festivals the Lípa Musica and Prague Proms in Czechia, the Czech Philharmonic Chamber Series in Prague Rudolfinum, the Wigmore Hall in London. This concert house, one of the most prestigious in the world, has chosen the Smetana Trio as the residential ensemble for the season 2023/24.

Jitka Čechová completed her piano studies at Prague Conservatory under Jan Novotný and continued at the Academy of Performing Arts under Peter Toperczer. She completed her postgraduate studies under Eugen Indjic in Paris and Vitali Berzon in Freiburg, and took master classes under Rudolf Kehrner in Weimar, and Eugen Indjic and Lazar Berman in Piešťany.

She has been the laureate of numerous international competitions and the subject of critical acclaim as a soloist in many European countries as well as in South Africa, South America and Japan.

She performs regularly on prestigious international stages and festivals both at home and abroad (Edinburgh, Graz, Paris, Frankfurt, Baden-Baden, the Bodensee Festival, Prague Spring, Ticino Musica etc.). For Jitka Čechová, chamber music is one of the essential elements of her musical identity. She has made a number of solo and chamber recordings for Czech and international labels. In 2014 she finished a large project of the complete piano works by Bedřich Smetana for Supraphon (8 CDs). Presently she is realizing the new recording project of the Czech Radio – the complete sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti. In the spring 2016 will be released the new CD of the complete 3 piano concertos and Concertino by Josef Páleníček with the Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra, conducted by R. Zollman and S. Vavrinek.

Violinist **Jan Talich** is known nowadays an exceptional figure not only on the Czech cultural scene, but also internationally recognised. In his rich career he is able to connect, at the highest level, his knowledge and experiences of several professions. He performs as a soloist, chamber player, conductor and pedagogue the world-over.

His longest path has been that of his solo career. Whilst still at the Prague Academy he won the both national and international competitions (Zagreb 89). These helped him begin his solo career, which lasts until today. He has performed with piano partners such as Itamar Golan, Gottlieb Wallish, Jean-Yves Thibaudet and Jean Bernard Pommier.

For 5 years he was a member of the Kubelík Trio, with whom he recorded the complete Czech writings for piano trio. He left to take up the post of first violinist of the Talich Quartet. The quartet, founded by his father in the year 1964, is one of the world's best ensembles. During the 20 years of his time in the quartet they have performed regularly in the best concert halls of the world and have recorded tens of CDs.

Jan Talich plays the extraordinary violins made by J. Gagliano in 1780 and by G. P. Maggini in 1600.

Jan Páleníček studied at the Conservatory and the Academy of the Performing Arts in Prague under Saša Večtomov and Miloš Sádlo. Close contacts with Paul Tortelier, the world-famous French cellist, made for a happy culmination to his early development. He studied chamber music under his father, Josef Páleníček, and in the class of Josef Vlach – first violin in the legendary Vlach Quartet.

Participation in international competitions has brought Jan Páleníček numerous awards. As a soloist he plays regularly with leading Czech and international orchestras, including the Prague Symphony Orchestra, the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra Ostrava, the Lugano Festival Orchestra (Switzerland), the Suk Chamber Orchestra, the Hradec Králové Symphony Orchestra, the Pardubice Chamber Philharmonic, the Monte Carlo Philharmonic, the Brno

State Philharmonic, the Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra, the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra (Germany), the Prague Philharmonia, the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra Olomouc, and the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic-Durban (South Africa). His concert tours have taken him not only to numerous Europe countries, but to America, Africa and Japan as well.

He has made numerous recordings for both Czech and international labels, and for radio and television. His recordings of the sonatas of Brahms, Martinů, and Rachmaninov and the concertos of Dvořák, Tchaikovsky and Haydn have been exceptionally well received.

For a number of years he taught at the Prague Conservatory and the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague.

Jan Páleníček plays the unique French instrument made by F. Delanoy in 1829.

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Smetana Trio

Critical Acclaim



“Even in 2020’s crowded field of Beethoven recordings, this one by the Smetana Trio stands out. Their double album frames the familiar *Archduke* and Ghost Trios with the Op. 1 No. 3 and Op. 70 No. 2, and all four works come across with vibrant, persuasive energy in the warm but clean acoustic of the studio.”

BBC Music Magazine

“The Smetana Trio's performances, as captured in Supraphon's warm recording, are totally compelling. It's no mean feat that the players not only negotiate the ebb and flow of the musical argument in each work with tremendous flexibility of nuance, but that their imaginative approach to balance and texturing ensures that the listener is completely involved in the drama from first bar to last.”

BBC Music Magazine

“The performances are faultless: the Dvorak is done with exuberant grandeur, the other two Trios with a concentrated precision that gives the impression that the three players are functioning as an indivisible unit.”

The Guardian

“The Smetana’s performance of the Ravel is not coolly ‘classical’, but fully alive to its poignancy and inventive coloring.”

BBC Music Magazine

“The passion for music of their homeland was matched by musical skill, flawless ensemble, and exceptional communicative ability.”

American Record Guide

"The musicians knew where they were going and exactly how to get there, without wasted motion, in razor sharp turns and quick sprints."

OC Register

“Their reading of the first movement of the Smetana Piano Trio is one of the most satisfyingly dramatic I have heard on disc.”

BBC Music Magazine

“Energy, a gripping emotional range and flawless technique are just a few things that come to mind on listening to the Smetana Trio’s recording of the Trios in F minor, Op. 65 and No. 4, Op. 90, or the ‘Dumky’. Crisp, determined passages contrast with moments of sublime legato where bowing is so flawless that the cello’s and violin’s interlocking melodies melt into one inseparable world. The three performers listen to each other so acutely that, if you were at a live performance, you’d be afraid to breathe for fear of interrupting: each member of the trio responds to the tiniest nuance... they live the music and you can’t help but to live it with them.”

BBC Music Magazine

“This is a top-notch disc containing two of the twentieth century’s great Piano Trios superbly performed and very well recorded. The Smetana Trio celebrates its eightieth anniversary in 2014 but has had many changes of

personnel over the years. The key thing is that the current group uphold if not surpass the musical ideal and technical excellence of its predecessors. “

Music Web International

“As with their previous recordings, there is nothing routine about the Smetana Trio’s approach to this engaging repertoire. Every aspect of their interpretation is carefully considered without losing an ounce of spontaneity. Individual lines are remarkable for their focus and beauty, though the powerful sense of ensemble is never sacrificed to individual display. “

BBC Music Magazine

“The players bring a mark of a great ensemble to all three pieces: unity of purpose combined with individuality of character. A delight.”

The Telegraph

“The program opens with the Dumky Trio, and right from the start you can tell that this is going to be a great performance. Passion and spontaneity unite with rhythmic precision and a real feeling for the dance... Without question, this is a very great recording, an essential acquisition whether you already love this music or just want to get to know it better.”

Classics Today

"The three instruments blended into a single sound, a perfect understanding of the varied moods, and in addition a delight in the music which had no technical boundaries. At the same time the architecture of the movements was never neglected, and never for a moment did the musicians lose sight of the whole while shaping the details."

Badische Neueste Nachrichten, Karlsruhe

"The pianist Jitka Cechová, the violinist Jana Vonaskova-Nováková, and the violoncellist Palenicek were perfectly prepared, appeared even to breathe in unison, and presented the music with humility, passion, and the highest standard of tonal culture."

Harmonie

“The tempos are vigorous but under control, balance between the three musicians is impeccable, especially considering how busy the score gets at times, and the overall sense of interpretation is one of fiery passion, energy, and excitement.”

All Music

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December 11, 2020

The best classical albums released in 2020

A list of the greatest classical music recordings released this year, as chosen by the BBC Music Magazine critics

Beethoven

Piano Trios Nos 3, 5 'Ghost', 6 & 7 'Archduke'

Smetana Trio

Supraphon SU42882 132:05 mins (2 discs)

'Even in 2020's crowded field of Beethoven recordings, this one by the Smetana Trio stands out. Their double album frames the familiar *Archduke* and *Ghost* Trios with the Op. 1 No. 3 and Op. 70 No. 2, and all four works come across with vibrant, persuasive energy in the warm but clean acoustic of the studio.'



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January 18, 2021

Best recordings of Shostakovich's Piano Trio No. 2

By Erik Levi



Despite official Soviet disapproval of the Second Piano Trio, the composer made two recordings of the work in the immediate post-war era. The first, featuring the performers who gave the world premiere, dates from 1945. It was followed a year or so later by one taped in Prague with violinist David Oistrakh and cellist Miloš Sádlo. Currently available as downloads on the Doremi label, both performances are fascinating historical documents, even though they are captured in somewhat inferior sound. What they certainly reveal is the brilliance of Shostakovich's piano playing, as well as some notable differences in matters of tempo and nuance that don't always tally with the markings in the score.

One consistent feature of these recordings is the frighteningly breakneck speeds adopted by both sets of these performers in the *Scherzo*. Of the few modern ensembles that get anywhere near to this daredevil approach, undoubtedly the most compelling interpretation comes from the Smetana Trio. The impact of its no-holds-barred breathless approach to this movement is overwhelming, making the music sound completely unhinged.

The Smetana Trio revels in the extremes of dynamics, texture and mood that characterises Shostakovich's score, yet achieves the greatest emotional intensity without recourse to idiosyncratic interpretative mannerisms. What is particularly striking about this performance is its comprehensive mastery of the music's architecture, a good example being the subtle way the players build up tension in the slow tread of the *Passacaglia* while at the same time maintaining a deliberately subdued colour throughout. This strategy pays particular dividends in the long-term connection between the slow movement and the finale, thereby making the outburst of anger that engulfs the climax near the end of the work and the ensuing collapse into near exhaustion in the coda all the more shattering.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of all comes earlier on. At the opening, for example, violinist Jiří Vodička follows



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cellist Jan Páleníček's glassy harmonics by imbuing his lamenting theme with a distinctive sobbing vibrato that sets the mournful tone for the rest of the movement. Once the music gathers

momentum, the Smetana Trio is adept at negotiating the intensification of the musical argument, avoiding awkward gear changes every time the music's emotional temperature rises.

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November 26, 2020

Beethoven: Piano Trios Nos 3, 5, 6 & 7

Smetana Trio (Supraphon)

Our rating

5.0 out of 5 star rating

Even in 2020's crowded field of Beethoven recordings, this one by the Smetana Trio stands out. Their double album frames the familiar *Archduke* and *Ghost* Trios with the Op. 1 No. 3 and Op. 70 No. 2, and all four works come across with vibrant, persuasive energy in the warm but clean acoustic of the studio.

From its deceptively gentle introduction onwards, the opening movement of Op. 1 No. 3 has a weight to its tempo that keeps it swinging like a pendulum, and the closing movement has more urgency and turmoil than many groups would be able to fit into its relatively conventional rondo structure. The beginning of the *Archduke* is dreamier than some – Jitka Čechová's

gently pulsing piano accompaniment here and elsewhere can sound mysterious and modern – allowing room to grow into jubilation at the end of the first section.

Čechová can be suave one moment, kittenish the next; indeed, from the heightened colours and contrasts of the *Ghost* Trio's slow movement to the blanched, church-like tone of the call-and-response passages in Op. 70 No. 2's third movement, all three musicians bring plenty of personality.

The truly striking thing is how seamlessly they work together. Jan Talich's violin tone can be velvety and almost viola-like, meaning he shares a genuine tonal middle ground with Jan Páleníček's cello; this in turn acts as a springboard for Čechová's tonal nuance. It all makes for an extensive colour palette, imaginatively applied but never overdone in these exuberant and hugely enjoyable performances.



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May 2019

A magnificent set of works from the Smetana Trio

Erik Levi applauds an imaginative programme by three very different composers, superbly performed



Nuanced playing:
the Smetana Trio in
fine dramatic form

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★

RECORDING ★★★★★

This deftly-compiled programme turns out to be an absolute winner. Although all three piano trios, composed within the space of four years, share similar musical characteristics, not least an intensely emotional language packed with swooning melodies and a propensity to clothe them in full-blooded quasi-orchestral textures, there are sufficient differences in each work's musical orientation to provide ample variety of musical experience. Brahms is the obvious model for Zemlinsky's 1896 Trio (originally conceived for clarinet, cello and piano), evident in the structural design and rhythmic ambiguity of Zemlinsky's writing; yet

there are also touches of exploratory harmony here and there that anticipate the composer's later style. In contrast, Arensky's more stylistically eclectic First Trio of 1894 appears to look back nostalgically at an earlier The Smetana Trio's performances are totally compelling Romantic age dominated by Mendelssohn and Schumann and revels in a succession of gorgeously memorable thematic ideas. Arguably, the most original work is by the 19-year-old Rachmaninov. Admittedly Tchaikovsky is a pervasive influence on his single movement Trio eMgiaque No.1 of 1892, but the mysterious string patterns that open the work, as well as later passage



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work in the turbulent middle section, are strikingly individual.

The Smetana Trio's performances, as captured in Supraphon's warm recording, are totally compelling. It's no mean feat that the players not only negotiate the ebb and flow of the

musical argument in each work with tremendous flexibility of nuance, but that their imaginative approach to balance and texturing ensures that the listener is completely involved in the drama from first bar to last.

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GRAMOPHONE

THE WORLD'S BEST CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEWS

May 2019

ZEMLINSKY; RACHMANINOV; ARENSKY Piano Trios



The Smetana Trio is one of those groups in the grand Czech tradition; this latest line-up features three formidably fine musicians, including cellist Jan

Páleníček, whose pianist father Josef co-founded the group in 1934. It's good to have an unorthodox programme and they bring to all three pieces a warmth and strong sense of communicativeness. Zemlinsky was in his mid-twenties when he wrote his D minor Trio, initially conceived as a trio for clarinet, cello and piano and composed for a competition (in which he came third). He then reworked it for the present line-up, which is more effective still, the violin able to stand out from the texture in a way the clarinet cannot. It's full of good things – the slow movement in the Smetana's reading is allowed to dream but never sounds indulgent (I find the Beaux Arts a little slow here), and the violin and cello lines entwine with great affection. The finale's combination of skittishness and expressive writing is well done, too, and the pianist ensures that the sometimes richly Brahmsian textures never overwhelm the balance.

Rachmaninov was just 19 when he wrote his first *Trio élégiaque*. The Smetana are alive to the piece's mix of tenderness and passion, and they produce some thrillingly hushed playing. Kremer's recent recording with Giedrė

Dirvanauskaitė and Daniil Trifonov is a little more driven, with climaxes perhaps more overtly exciting, but the sensitivity with which the players interact on the new recording is very winning. Just sample the cellist's rendition of the aching melody (track 4, from 9'09"), which is given due time to breathe, compared to which Kremer's group sound somewhat edgier.

Arensky's First Trio was written two years after the Rachmaninov and, like much of his music, it deserves to be better known. The Smetana make a very strong case for it, with the string players constantly varying the colouring of the Schumannesque main theme of the first movement. The Wanderer are a degree more Classical in their approach but I like the wholeheartedness of this new set. The Scherzo has a tremendous sense of play and energy to it, the Smetana enjoying Arensky's imaginative string textures, whereas the Wanderer opt for a more highly polished finish; I particularly like the warmth the Czech players bring to its Trio. The Smetana's slower tempo for the *Adagio* plays up its elegiac quality, giving it a sombre beauty that is very telling. The finale has a real drama and drive, the Smetana making much of the contrast between jagged energy and the more lyrical moments. The reintroduction near the close of the theme that opened the work makes for a touching farewell, and is particularly potently realised by the Smetana Trio.



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The Washington Post

February 26, 2018

Czech piano trio makes Washington debut

By Charles T. Downey

The Smetana Trio, the leading Czech piano trio since its founding in 1934, had yet to perform in Washington. The Phillips Collection presented the local debut of the group's current formation on Sunday afternoon. During the renovation of the museum's Music Room, the Phillips series has relied on alternate venues with varied success. The International Student House of Washington offered a space comparable in size, albeit with less precise climate control.

The influence of Brahms came across clearly in Zemlinsky's early Piano Trio, Op. 3, from 1896, from a time when Zemlinsky and his colleagues were known as "the dangerous Brahmins." The more emotionally overwrought parts of the piece revealed some rhythmic disparity among the three musicians, with cellist Jan Palenicek often engulfed in overly forceful sound from his two partners. The heat in the room may have accounted for occasional intonation issues, especially from the cello.

Just as Zemlinsky was looking backward to Brahms, the young Shostakovich

seemed to conjure Tchaikovsky or Rimsky-Korsakov at times in his first piano trio, a single movement inspired by a youthful romantic attachment. Both string players excelled in solo moments on the piece's aching main theme, with violinist Jiri Vodicka at his best in a prolonged solo on the low strings, sounding at times like a cello, with treble chords cascading down in the piano.

Ferocious pianist Jitka Cechova proved the ensemble's star, nowhere more so than in Mendelssohn's scintillating first piano trio. In the devilishly fast Scherzo, for example, she dazzled with transparent, perfectly articulated finger work, flying upward through chromatic scales as light as a feather. The more delicate approach at the keyboard in turn created the program's most delightful ensemble playing, in the lyrical slow movement especially.

A final highlight came with the encore, the "Czardas" movement from Czech composer Roman Haas's "Multicultural Suite," a thrilling evocation of the Hungarian folk dance.



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March 2, 2018

Czech musicians play to Coastal Concerts full house

By Dennis Forney

A weekend of wet and soggy days needed something sparkling to give it a lift. For those in the full house for the Coastal Concerts presentation last Saturday afternoon, the world famous Smetana Trio delivered.

Pianist Jitka Cechova, violinist Jiri Vodicka, and cellist Jan Palenicek, accomplished Czech soloists in their own right, displayed the orchestral alchemy of their instrumental combination.

The rich sound of the ensemble filled every corner of the cavernous yet acoustically balanced fellowship hall of Bethel United Methodist Church in Lewes.

They gave masterful, sensitive and artistic voice to the genius of composers Alexander Zemlinsky, Dmitri Shostakovich and Felix Mendelssohn.

Watching the technically flawless and pure physical union between the musicians and their instruments, knowing the discipline and life's days filled with practicing, and listening to the enrapturing result made audience members even more grateful for their ears and ability to appreciate.

"It's transcendental for us," said pianist Cechova following the concert. "We are in the middle, between the composers and the audience, and the trio format offers a marvelous treasure of possibilities. We are all soloists, but this trio allows us to play together. It's not work for us. It's joyous. We love it."

That energy and enthusiasm charged all three pieces they played. Press photos of the group show a lot of swagger - the kind of swagger that comes from the self-confidence required of solo performers. But while sections in the different pieces, sounding concerto-like, gave them the opportunity to display their virtuosity, the nonverbal language among the three of occasional glances, nods and shoulder lifts left no doubt that the ensemble quality of their performances was of paramount importance.

The opening piece by Zemlinsky set the stage for the breadth of the performances, with lengthy passages of full, late-romantic style and play between the instruments. Occasional stretches of modernist dissonance further showcased the more melodic sections. The piece also established the technical mastery of the ensemble.

The musicians were fully transported when they launched into the program's second piece, a single-movement trio in C minor by Shostakovich.

"He was 17 when he wrote the piece," said Cechova afterward. "He was in love but was being spurned, and all of that shows up in the music."

The piece is technically demanding, with fingers on the keyboard, violin and cello at times flying at the speed of light from high register to low register: ecstasy and sorrow. And then there were celestial passages, when the flowing strings



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blended with twinkling stars at the upper end of the keyboard. The trio made the audience feel the sublime nature of the love, born of the heavens, and evinced by the passionate composer in his music.

The four-movement D minor Opus 49 by Mendelssohn, after the intermission, brought the full orchestral potential of the trio to the fore.

Following a broad and lyrical opening movement, the trio settled into a quiet, melodic song-like second movement that mesmerized the audience.

A video camera trained on the piano keyboard and Cechova's supple hands allowed the audience to watch, on an overhead screen, the delicacy and elegance of her fingers as she released the music from the instrument.

A quick and frenetic third movement jolted the audience out of the sweetness of the second, and set up the final movement with sections that once again spotlighted the virtuosity of all three players.

The depth of Palenicek's cello, the singing of Vodicka's violin, and the

dynamism of Cechova's piano, heading off in their own directions and, like jazz, then following and blending the music back to its beginnings for an accelerated and crescendoing finale, once again reminded the audience of the power of the trio.

The finale brought the audience to its feet. The applause brought the musicians back for an encore.

Glowing and glistening from their Mendelssohn success, the Smetana Trio responded with a classic Czech dance, the third movement of Roman Haas' multicultural suite. It started without shyness, skipped the lower gears, ramped up quickly to a head-shaking speed, sustained that in overdrive, and then, like Sambo's tiger whirling around the tree and eventually melting into butter, it became a fusion of sound that rang through the enthusiastic applause and against the hall's walls, long after the musicians let their quivering hands drop from their instruments.

The overall excellent concert brought sunshine to a cloudy day.

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February 17, 2018

Smetana Trio Dazzles in Durham

By Chelsea Huber

For the first time since 2014, the Smetana Trio, the Czech Republic's most renowned chamber ensemble, is touring North America. Luckily, the second stop on their tour was Duke's Baldwin Auditorium in Durham. Sponsored by Duke Performances, the program featured three trios of Zemlinsky, Shostakovich, and Mendelssohn. This concert did not disappoint – naturally, because the Smetana Trio is internationally lauded for both live performances and for a discography of nearly a dozen albums. The ensemble was originally created in 1934; today's members are pianist Jitka Čechová, violinist Jiří Vodička, and Jan Páleníček, cellist. It goes without saying that each musician is renowned as a solo figure – as an ensemble, they are indeed a force to be reckoned with.

The first movement of Alexander von Zemlinsky's Piano Trio in D minor, Op. 3 opens with stern darkness and a sense of rubato in all three instruments. It is likely that this trio was the majority of the audience members' introduction to this Austrian composer, whose work extended an air of Romanticism into the 20th century. A rolling, Schubert-esque figure in the piano reiterates this. Wandering melodies suggest modern influence, but contrary to Zemlinsky's ties to Schoenberg, the work is entirely tonal. Without a doubt, violinist Vodička's interpretations of these melodies were stately yet serene, complementing Páleníček's intense,

vivid vibrato. The Andante second movement was calmer than the first without losing a sense of urgency through small moments of tension and dissonance. A highlight of this trio, the three musicians showcased their spontaneity while handling dynamic changes, without losing touch with one another. The playful third movement was a lovely departure from the slight heaviness of the previous two, showcasing many sides of the Smetana Trio's expression in just one work.

The "Poeme" Trio by Shostakovich, full of melodic leaps and unpredictable texture changes, gave the Smetana Trio music for a powerful, visceral performance. Chilling moments occurred with Páleníček's solos, and likewise in Vodička's cuttingly passionate violin spotlights. In between, fierce, short unison bow strokes ramped up tension. The conclusion however, was transcendent, featuring a highly dramatic transition to the major mode that is no easy task to navigate.

Lovers of Mendelssohn were surely delighted with the Smetana Trio's performance of his Piano Trio, No. 1. The first movement was engrossing from the beginning, with Čechová providing a flowing, liquid atmosphere that also pinpointed accents in the strings. The second movement took a breath; it was steady and chordal with a few passionate outbursts. The Scherzo third movement was definitely a highlight of the whole program, with all



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three instruments united in equally vivacious melodies. Vodička's facial expressions here were a clue to the audience of how much the Trio members were enjoying themselves within the music. This authenticity continued with the fourth movement, where there was some tension, calm, and playfulness all wrapped into one movement. The ending was astounding,

with all three artists playing rapid figures perfectly in unison.

The concert concluded with not one, but two encores – the first was a movement from Roman Haas' *Multicultural Suite* and the second was, naturally, the first movement of Dvořák's beloved "Dumky" Trio (No. 4). These two together provided a crowd-pleasing ending to a fabulous concert.

smetana trio

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May 2017

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE
AWARDS2017

CHAMBER AWARD

Smetana Trio



Martinů Piano Trios Nos 1-3; Bergerettes

Smetana Trio
Supraphon SU 4197-2

'For us this is not only an award for our interpretation

but a fantastic compliment for Czech music,' says Jitka Čechová, the Smetana Trio's pianist. 'We are sure about Martinů's place in the front line of 20th-century composers. His chamber works are extraordinary and should be heard on the prestigious stages around the world.'

This is not the first time the Smetanas have won a BBC Music Magazine Award. Back in 2007, their stunning Dvořák disc also scooped the Chamber prize. But recording Martinů's Three Piano Trios and the *Bergerettes* was particularly meaningful for this Czech trio. 'It's not only as a trio that we love to play his music. We also love his solos, duos and concertos, and have done since our childhoods,' says Čechová. When the disc was the magazine's Recording of the Month last June, she explained that 'his music is so fantastic, colourful and interesting. The First Trio is very complicated and by the last trio, 20 years later, he's found a more simple way to compose.' So what is it that makes his

music universally appealing? 'He was a real genius,' she says. 'He uses folklore, American jazz, Czech music... there's such fantasy and nostalgia. It's a fantastic combination.'

There's a direct link from Martinů to the Smetana Trio, via their cellist Jan Páleníček. He is the son of the great Czech pianist Josef Páleníček, who met Martinů in Paris where they both studied composition with Albert Roussel. 'They began a lifelong friendship, and Josef championed Martinů's music,' says Čechová. 'He was probably the best interpreter of Martinů's music, and through Jan we have the fantastic privilege of a view into Martinů's musical soul.' And so, thanks to the Smetana Trio, do we.



CZECH IN: the Smetana Trio win with Martinů

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Recording of the Month

It would be hard to find more ardent champions of Martinů's complete piano trios than the Smetana Trio, alive to every mercurial mood and nuance of this still underrated music, p72



TRIUMPHANT TRIO:
the Smetana Trio
revel in Martinů



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THE TIMES

April 4, 2016

CLASSICAL

ALBUM OF THE WEEK

MARTINU


Complete Piano Trios
Smetana Trio

Supraphon SU41972

Bohuslav Martinu composed about 90 chamber works, and his rarely programmed piano trios neatly fill one CD in these exemplary, impassioned performances from the Smetanas. The four works date from the 1930s (the *Cinq pièces brèves*, later designated by the composer as his Piano Trio No 1; and the "Bergerettes", which sound like miniatures, but comprise the longest piece recorded here) and the beginning of the 1950s (Piano Trios Nos 2, in D minor, and 3, in C major). By 1950, the exiled composer was writing for American tastes, and his music resonates with nostalgia for his Czech homeland: the lyrical violin passages in both trios recall Dvorak's folksy melodies and dance rhythms. The earlier, more experimental works suggest a post-impressionist idiom with dashes



of Hindemithian modernism. The virtuoso demands of this hugely attractive music are meat and drink to these wonderful Czech musicians, including Jitka Cechova, above. Indeed, it would be hard to imagine a better way to get to know this exhilarating and fresh music than from the hands, heads and hearts of the Smetanas. **HC**

ST  Listen to the classical album of the week at spoti.fi/hughcanning

RECORDING OF THE MONTH



From tragedy to jubilation

The Smetana Trio get to the heart of Martinů's world, says *David Nice*



MARTINŮ

Piano Trios Nos 1-3; Bergerettes
Smetana Trio
Supraphon SU 4197-2 71:30 mins

Viola player Maxim Rysanov's all-Martinů disc was my favourite recording from last year's listening (reviewed August 2015), and it's already obvious that the music for piano trio performed here by the Smetana Trio is going straight on the shortlist for 2016. Martinů's

chamber music reveals originality at every turn; there's so much of it, but each new discovery – sonata, duo, trio, quartet, serenade – seems to unveil a gem. The 20th-century Czech composer's genius is for having so many instantly recognisable musical thumbprints – Moravian syncopated dance-music chief among them – and at the same time being able to take each work in unexpected directions. This is music that never settles, yet somehow feels organic.

The Third Piano Trio of 1951 is the obvious masterpiece here,

and the Smetana Trio were wise to place it first in the programme. Its opening *Allegro moderato* movement is characteristically volatile, with some extraordinary writing for solo piano, and the *Allegro* finale lifts us to heights of manic jubilation; Martinů always was the most bipolar of composers, at least in the extreme

moods which mark his years of exile from his Czech homeland. I would put this whirling C major kaleidoscope up there with the finale of the Second Symphony (1943) for sheer clinching ecstasy, two

It's hard to imagine more ardent champions of Martinů

FURTHER LISTENING

Smetana Trio

SHOSTAKOVICH • RAVEL

Piano Trios Nos 1 & 2 • Piano Trio
Smetana Trio
Supraphon SU 4135-2 68:11 mins



'In No. 1, a youthful work inspired by love, the Smetanas bring out its playful self-awareness yet give the central episode's guileless, almost Arensky-style sweetness its due. The wry and brittle character of No. 2 is compellingly realised.'
July 2014

BRAHMS

The complete trios

Premysl Vojta (french horn), Ludmila Peterková (clarinet); Smetana Trio
Supraphon SU 4072-2 136:55 mins



'Here's an effective antidote to the notion of Brahms as 'all beer and beard'. It isn't often you hear this music played with such delicacy and atmospheric refinement. The Clarinet Trio is a revelation ... deeply poetic and full of late autumnal colours.'
April 2013

DVOŘÁK

Piano Trios Nos 3 & 4

Smetana Trio
Supraphon SU 3872-2 66:54 mins



'The Smetana Trio, excellently recorded, deliver landmark performances of both trios. The developmental intensity of the F minor Trio's first movement has rarely seemed more incandescent or the slow movement more winningly lyrical.' September 2006

of the most convincingly vibrant conclusions to any work.

Tragedy is potentially registered in the central *Andante* of the Third Trio, taking even further many of the depths in the more constantly sombre D minor Trio No. 2 (1950) and the *Adagio* of Trio No. 1 (1930), a relatively long movement among epigrammatic miniatures (the alternative title is *Cinq pièces brèves*). Here in the Third Trio, as elsewhere, the ecstatic cadence which first appeared in the opera *Julietta* and

which derives from Janáček's *Taras Bulba* makes crucial appearances, lifting the heart above all that sadness. It's not fanciful to hear in it Martinů's attempt to bring back the love of his life, composer and conductor Vítězlava Kaprálová, who died tragically young in 1940.

There's plenty of joy in the more straightforward forms of the five *Bergerettes*, written in 1939. Like most of the *scherzos* in Martinů's symphonies, these miniatures have identical outer sections and a more restful trio in the middle. The Smetana Trio, pictured on the CD cover looking chilled and like they might be good fun, really go rustic-wild in the final number, with plenty

of gut and grit – so track five is an excellent one to sample to see if this is to your taste – while pathos and nostalgia tend to be the tone of the middle sequences.

It's hard to imagine more ardent champions for this visceral, unpredictable music. And clear, warm sound is exactly what we've come to expect from the Supraphon label over the years.

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

RECORDING

★★★★★



ON THE PODCAST

Hear excerpts and a discussion of this recording on the **BBC Music Magazine** podcast, available free on iTunes or at www.classical-music.com

Q&A

JITKA CECHOVÁ

The Smetana Trio's pianist tells **REBECCA FRANKS**
why Martinů's music deserves to be heard more widely



Smetana is your trio's namesake; here you are playing Martinů. So it's fair to say you have a strong affinity for Czech music?

I hope so! It's a natural thing. And of course the public wants to hear Czech music from us. The father of our cellist, Jan Páleníček, was the great Czech pianist Josef Páleníček, who founded the Smetana Trio. He studied in Paris under Roussel, who also taught Martinů, and they met there many times. Josef promoted Martinů's music around the world. He also handed over to his son all his ideas and experiences about the interpretation of Martinů's music. This is an important connection.

Martinů is still not as well known as, say, Dvořák: where does his music stand in the repertoire for you?

I think Martinů is starting to receive more focus today, and I hope he will be known even better in the future. His music is so fantastic, colourful and interesting and his repertoire is huge; he wrote 90 chamber compositions for a variety of instruments. Between the first and last trios you can hear a big difference. The First Trio, the *Cinq pièces brèves*, is like an experiment: very complicated, rhythmical and polyphonic. The *Bergerettes* which follow are already a big contrast: they are incredible, mild, simple songs, influenced by pastoral French songs and dances. By the last trio, 20 years later, he's found a more simple way to compose: the melodies and harmonies are very simple. I think it's interesting to see this development.

And what are the benefits of being immersed in his music?

It's always so interesting to explore the complete work of a composer as you can really see the developments and learn about their life. We did the same with Smetana, Brahms and Dvořák. Martinů's music is necessary to play for a little bit longer because it is quite complicated. You have to get to the stage of being able to forget the difficult rhythms and just feel the fantastic music. That's a big pleasure, then. We enjoy his music so much and we hope the public will enjoy it with us.

smetana trio

the **arts** desk.com

April 30, 2016

Martinů: Complete Piano Trios

Smetana Trio (Supraphon)

By Graham Rickson



The radiance of Martinů's output is among its most endearing features, and it's striking that a composer so close to some of 20th century history's darker moments was able to express himself with such humanity and warmth. These four works for piano trio tick every box on the Martinů checklist, from affability through to wisdom and wit. I can't imagine anyone's life not being enriched after a few minutes' exposure to his late Piano Trio No. 3, a glorious distillation of all that's good about this composer's mature music. The singing theme which swells into life just a minute or so into the slow movement is indecently lush;

it's hard to believe that only three musicians are playing. There's a similar passage in the finale's central section, before the motoric toccata music returns. And what a coda – soulful, nostalgic and rhythmically exhilarating. A genuine masterpiece.

The Piano Trio No. 2 was also written during Martinů's post-war spell in the US. There's a similarly propulsive finale, though the pensive opening movement is the most striking. The Piano Trio No. 1, written in 1930, consists of "Cinq pieces brèves". Four of them are giddy romps. They pass in the blink of an eye, the gravitas reserved for a spare, elegiac



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second movement. Pianist Jitka Čechová's jazzy swirlings at the start of the final section are something to cherish. Completing the disc are the five *Bergerettes*, their irregular phrase lengths and soulful harmonies unmistakably evoking Czech folk music. Martinů composed them early in 1939: the sleeve essay's reference to this composer's "ability to free himself of the weight of the overbearing tension of the time" reads like a massive understatement. This is the greatest chamber disc I've heard in ages, and I can't imagine a better introduction to Martinů's music. Violinist Jiří Vodička and cellist Jan Páleníček match Čechová with rich, resonant playing. Truly excellent – trust me.

smetana trio



January/February 2015

New York

Smetana Trio

A cold and rainy October night could not dampen the spirits coming from SubCulture, a performing arts venue in the NoHo (north of Houston Street) neighborhood of lower Manhattan, close to NYU. In conjunction with the 92nd Street Y, SubCulture presents a classical concert series to complement its exceptionally varied schedule. The Smetana Trio is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year and touring with an all-Czech program that did not include Dvorak (until encore time). Cellist Jan Palenicek and pianist Jitka Cechova (husband & wife) have been a part of this group for nearly 20 years, and violinist Jiri Vodicka joined them two years ago. The passion for music of their homeland was matched by musical skill, flawless ensemble, and exceptional communicative ability.

The intimate subterranean concert space (about 150 people maximum) served the performers well. I expected a too-bright sound, given the concrete ceilings and bare wood floors, but was pleasantly surprised at an even and balanced sound where nothing was out of place and every detail was clear. We sometimes heard a slight rumble of a subway, but nothing more than I have heard at Carnegie Hall. Eight huge steel support pillars were incorporated into the decor and seating was organized with no impediment to sight lines.

Josef Suk (1874-1935) was a favorite pupil of Dvorak and married his daughter. His youthful Trio, Op. 2 was a perfect opening work. Full of energy and a hearty romantic spirit, the relatively short three-movement work allowed the trio and audience to get to know each other. Martinu's Trio No. 2 (1950) brought us into a very different sound world and musical style. It was a fine contrast to the Suk, even though the Czech roots of both clearly differentiated them from German-Austrian music. The Smetana Trio was completely at the service of the music, and I cannot imagine a more convincing performance.

The young Czech composer Roman Haas

(b. 1980) composed a piano trio with the unusual title of *Multicultural Suite*, which had its New York premiere here. From every possible angle this work fascinated me: the music was interesting, varied, and quite accessible. It hearing. The movement titles described the music and lent a further unification. Each of the three movements had two parts and two titles. The first was in Latin (Preludium, Interludio, Postludium) and the second, owing I'm sure to the multicultural title, in different languages (Walz Zusammen, Bolero Juntos, Czardas Közösen). The Latin sections were chorale-like, a little static, and suggested bells ringing (one reminded me of 'The Gibet' from Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit*). The trio's nuances kept these sections alive. Each of the dance sections was engaging and stylish in this brilliant performance. The concluding Czardas deserves special mention for the group's ensemble at such an exciting, breakneck speed that I'm sure everyone was holding his breath as they accelerated to the final chords. Based on my first hearing, I would certainly purchase a recording if the Smetana Trio makes one.

The second half of the concert was by the group's namesake. Smetana's Trio, Op. 15, is a substantial three-movement work that allowed the individual players to shine with significant solos. The piano part was of concerto proportions sometimes, and Cechova kept it in the realm of a piano trio without losing any of the exciting virtuosity. The group has recorded this work, and it is the foundation of their musical expression.

Their encore was a movement from Dvorak's *Dumky* Trio. The whole concert was both enlightening and enjoyable.

JAMES HARRINGTON



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October 19, 2014

Smetana Trio shines while going deeper into Czech music

By Tim Mangan



The Smetana Trio, billed as the foremost of today's Czech chamber ensembles, opened the Philharmonic Society's chamber music series Saturday at Irvine Barclay Theatre with a clever program. It was an all-Czech agenda, but there wasn't a note of Dvorák on it. The message was clear enough: There's more to Czech music than you-know-who.

The group was founded in 1934, one of the original members being the current cellist's father. It records regularly (for Supraphon) and travels widely. Its performances Saturday had a nice lived-in quality, which is to say naturalness and ease and the sense that no expression was forced, but, on the contrary, merely arrived at in the course of things.

The two string players, violinist Jiri Vodicka and cellist Jan Palenicek, are a

pleasure to hear. Their basic tone has a lightness and slenderness to it that helped give their phrasings a trim and direct quality. They both can bolster the intensity of a line with a quick but compact vibrato. Palenicek also used his bow tellingly, moving it with extra speed now and then, slicing into a phrase.

At the piano, Jitka Cechová was warm and generous and virtuosic. She partnered the strings without fuss, not making a big deal of it like many pianists in chamber groups do. The group just seems to breath together. Cechová kept the lid of the piano a quarter open (one presumes so that she wouldn't overpower the strings), but, in this hall at least, it made her articulation a trifle muffled in comparison to the strings. A small thing.

They opened with Josef Suk's Piano Trio, Op. 2, completed in 1891 when the composer was just 17. It is a lovely work, charming and folksy and, despite its C-minor key, for the most part cheery. It is nicely stitched together, too. It only goes on as long as it has to.

Martinu's Piano Trio No. 2, which had its premiere in 1950, is a compact work as well, lasting around 17 minutes. The work is fresh and energetic, even restless. The piece, on first acquaintance, seems stuffed with material – rich melodies and rhythmic

obsessions – and the compact forms keep it coming at the listener rapidly. Martinu also takes subtle advantage of genre's scoring possibilities, creating mezzotints and whirring textures.

The West Coast premiere of the "Multicultural Suite" by the young Czech composer Roman Haas (born in 1980) proved witty and lively. A series of dreamy introductions lead successively to an off-kilter waltz, a dramatic bolero and a rip-roaring czardas. Winding up the evening was Smetana's G-minor Trio, which is, like his string quartet, "From My Life," an autobiographical work, this one concerning the tragedy of

losing his 4-year-old daughter to scarlet fever.

Its sadness is full blown, chromatic and roiling; its nostalgia is melancholy and tender. The composer works through his memories and eventually places the child not out of them, but in an honored place within them, to be cherished.

Here the group's obvious familiarity with the score – the cellist's copy was so tattered it might have been a first edition – paid dividends. The musicians knew where they were going and exactly how to get there, without wasted motion, in razor sharp turns and quick sprints.

smetana trio



November 10, 2014

The Smetana Piano Trio, Chichester Chamber Concerts

By Peter Andrews

The second of the Chichester Chamber Concerts in the 2014-15 Season was given on Thursday 6th November in the Assembly Room by the highly accomplished Smetana Piano Trio. Despite their programme consisting of three trios all in a minor key, this proved to be a joyous and most enjoyable occasion.

The first item on the programme was the Piano Trio in C minor Op. 2 by Josef Suk. This is a student work, written in 1889 when Suk, the son of a village organist, was just 16 or 17 and a student at the Prague Conservatory. Following revisions suggested by Suk's composition teacher, Karel Stecker, it was performed at a student concert where it impressed the great Czech composer Anton Dvořák who was in the audience. Further revision followed, suggested by Dvořák, and the work was published in its final form in 1891. It opens with powerful descending piano chords vying with a legato melody in the strings. Initial concerns that violinist Jiří Vodička's delicate Guadagnini instrument would be overwhelmed by the piano of Jitka Čechová and the cello of Jan Páleníček were quickly dispelled when the second subject appeared, introduced by the cello. Both the second and third movements feature dance rhythms before the work ends with an energetic march. This was a persuasive

performance played with great delicacy and charm.

It was followed by a performance of the only non-Czech work on the programme – the mighty Piano Trio in A minor by Maurice Ravel – one of the truly great pieces written for this combination of instruments. Again, the piano leads the way, dictating the character of the first movement, and is followed by the stringed instruments in widely spaced octaves (a Ravel trademark). This is sublime music that received a suitably dreamlike treatment from the Smetana Trio. The following two movements marked Pantoum (a reference to a Mayan poetic form used by Victor Hugo) and Passacaille were also marked by exquisite playing. The theme of the spirited final movement, marked Animé, is introduced by the piano through a delicate haze of string sound in a masterly blend of the percussive keyboard instrument and the legato singing of the strings. The Ravel trio calls for great virtuosity which was duly supplied by the Smetana Trio.

The final work was the G minor piano trio Op.15 by Bedřich Smetana, regarded in his homeland as the father of Czech music. Born in 1824, Smetana gave his first performance as a pianist at the age of six. Despite discouragement from his father, Smetana embarked on a musical career but took some time to become



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established, having his first real successes in Gothenburg. His personal life was marked by tragedy. In July 1854 his second daughter Gabriele died of tuberculosis and a year later his eldest daughter, Bedřiška, who was already showing signs of musical precocity at the age of four, died of scarlet fever. It was after her death that Smetana started the composition of this trio; a grief filled work relieved by happy, energetic interludes in which the composer seems to be recalling the joy his daughter gave him. It is a work that calls for forceful, intense playing as well as great

poignancy, both fully demonstrated by the Smetana Trio in this empathetic performance.

A lively encore by the modern Czech composer Roman Haas, his Postludium and Czardas, rounded off a splendid evening of music making of the highest quality and sent the audience buzzing into the night.

The next Chichester Chamber Concert is on Thursday 4th December in the Assembly Room when Hannah Marcinowicz (clarinet and saxophone) and the Maggini String Trio are the guests.

smetana trio

ConcertoNet.com

October 22, 2014

The Laughter and the Lacrymosa

By Harry Rolnick

New York
Subculture
10/22/2014 -

Josef Suk: *Piano Trio in C minor*, Op. 2; Bohuslav Martinů: *Piano Trio in No. 2 in D minor*, H. 327; Roman Haas: *Multicultural Suite for Piano Trio* (New York premiere) Bedřich Smetana : *Piano Trio in G minor* Op. 15



92 Concerts at SubCulture Co-Presentation: The Smetana Trio: Jitka Čechová (Piano), Jiří Vodička (Violin) Jan Páleníček (Cello)

Quite the opposite. I was going to a concert of Czech music. Which meant that, no matter what the emotion, no matter what the musical message, underneath would be a joy and dancing and something just quirky enough to make even the geekiest body internally sing.

I had no idea that 2014 was the Year of Czech Music (proclaimed

by the Czech Government), but last week's program of two operas by Bohuslav Martinů, even with its theatrical shortcomings, was still an experience to relish. Martinů was part of the recital of the Smetana Trio but so were Josef Suk, Bedřich Smetana, and a new composer named Roman Haas.

And while the Smetana Trio celebrates its 80th Birthday this



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year, the young, ever-smiling violinist Jiří Vodička and the piano-cello married couple Jitka Čechová and Jan Páleníček were like young friends the moment they came on the Sub-Culture stage.

But this is the mode of Czech musicians. In Hong Kong, I became friends with a visiting violinist-teacher from the Prague Symphony and the late great pianist, Rudolf Firkusny, and going out with them, one felt not only their geniality and quiet humor but one realized exactly why Mozart's favorite city was never Salzburg or Vienna: it was always Prague.

These heirs of the Smetana Trio showed their exuberance in the first work, by the patriarch of the eminent Czech family, Joseph Suk. His later works were deeper and more emotional, after his wife (Dvořák's daughter) died. But this *Trio* was equally expressive, and most unusual. Where the first movement was danceable and delightful, the second movement was nothing less than a Spanish *habenera*. Perhaps the rhythms can be found in the Bohemian or Moravian countryside, but it sounded very Iberian. After the Martinů operas, his chamber music seemed unfettered, a mixture of styles, played with the exuberance of the three players. In SubCulture, the intimacy and the acoustics make any error all too dominating. Here, both violin and cello sounds were close, the rubatos, so necessary, were very personal, offering the sound of improvisation.

In the Martinů, while Ms. Čechová's piano work was flashy

enough, the "conversations" between violin and cello were almost spoken. With Janáček, those words would be almost literal, but Martinů was the purer musician, and the inflections were sufficient in themselves.

The New York premiere of *Multicultural Suite* by Roman Haas was a divertimento. A mock-heavy waltz (actually a very very Czech-Viennese heavy waltz), a bolero, and of course a fierce czardas—the kind of Gypsy dance which Liszt and Brahms and Dvořák had paraded as Hungarian music—to show off all three musicians.

The Smetana *Trio* was by far the most serious and Germanic work. It could have been written partly by Brahms—but, like Schumann, Smetana wore his heart on his sleeve, and was never afraid to add honest tragedy.

The tragedy in this case was the death of his daughter, from scarlet fever. So, eschewing the dancing *Bartered Bride* joy, or the heroism of *qqMa Vlast*, we had here untrammelled sadness, produced by a man of utter genius. In fact, his genius has been underrated outside his country simply because his orchestral work is so immediately popular. But listening to this work by the Smetana Trio, one could somehow see the darkness behind the dancing, the so-conscious elegy.

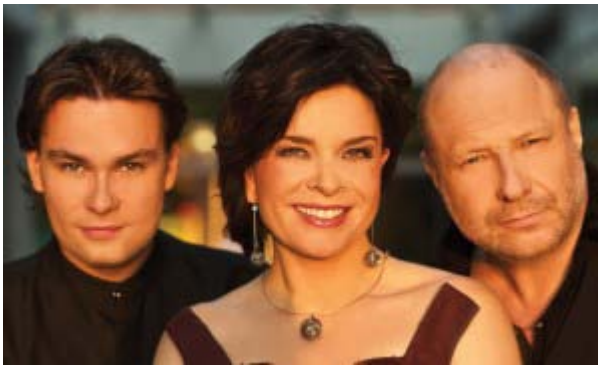
For a concert of such joy, even with a Dvořák encore, this was an unexpected *lacrymosa*, but hardly tearful enough to cloak the human playing of this most personable group.

smetana trio



October 23, 2014

International flavor with Czech tradition



SubCulture, the intimate downtown performance venue, has established itself as an outlet for world-class performances. They have programmed these performances in collaboration with the greater Institutions of the classical world like the 92Y, and the New York Philharmonic.

Yesterday's evening with the ***Smetana Trio***, jointly presented by SubCulture and the 92Y, brought musical mastery

and international flavor to the local scene at Subculture, with their world-class representation of a wide variety of Czech composers.

The foremost Czech chamber ensemble, supported by the Czech Center New York, currently on cross-country tour, was founded in 1934 by the legendary Czech pianist Josef Páleníček. The trio's longstanding traditions were palpably present, showcasing each of the strong individualities of each performer: pianist **Jitka Čechová**, violinist **Jiří Vodička** and cellist **Jan Páleníček**.

Especially soulful in the second half of the program, the trio portrayed the work of its namesake, composer **Bedřich Smetana's** Piano Trio in G minor, Op.15, with all its characteristics of hauntingly beautiful melodies, halting rhythmic climaxes and propelling drama.

While it always seems difficult to establish a specifically national idiom within the abstract realms of musical language, the trio's intention to familiarize its intimately addressable audience with works bearing its own national cultural flavor, seemed convincing.

The program included works by composers as varied as Josef Suk, Bohuslav Martinů and a New York premiere by Roman Haas. Amazingly, one felt something overall connected in the music. Perhaps it's a bit of a cliché in our times of leveling all and equalizing ideals, but it was invigorating to acknowledge that – like in a Milan Kundera novel – different heritages bring different characteristics to art's exploration of the great themes of existence.



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smetana trio

BBC
music
July 2014



FIRST FORAYS:
Smetana Trio embark
on French repertoire



SHOSTAKOVICH

Piano Trios Nos 1 & 2

RAVEL

Piano Trio in A minor

Smetana Trio

Supraphon SU41452 68:11 mins

BBC Music Direct £20.99

There is a surprising affinity between Ravel's haunted, twilight Piano Trio and Shostakovich's Trio No. 2 with its ethereal opening of cello harmonics followed in canon by violin in a lower register. Both works were written against the background of war, and have often been coupled on disc before this, the Smetana Trio's first venture into French repertoire.

The Smetana's performance of the Ravel is not coolly 'Classical', but fully alive to its poignancy and inventive colouring. Pianist Jitka Čechová starts a touch slower than Ravel's metronome mark, yet she and her colleagues observe Ravel's relative tempos scrupulously, and the music – given time to breathe – becomes unusually expressive. You can hear where Ravel's pupil

Vaughan Williams got several ideas – in the first movement's eerie ending, for example – and the powerfully rendered third movement 'Passacaille' is suitably contrasted with the second movement 'Pantoum' and the shimmering finale.

The two Shostakovich Trios are, if anything, even more impressive. In No. 1, a youthful work inspired by love, the Smetanas bring out its playful self-awareness yet give the central episode's guileless, almost Arensky-style sweetness its due. The wry and brittle character of No. 2 is compellingly realised, with a *scherzo* both exhilarating and sarcastic, and a weighty chaconne (a close cousin of the passacaglia form used by Ravel in his third movement). Meanwhile, the bitter final dance acts as an effective foil to the finale's dream-like recollections of the eerie first movement and the chaconne.

Daniel Jaffé

PERFORMANCE

RECORDING

★★★★★
★★★★★



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June 2014

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

By Nick Barnard



Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)

Piano Trio No.1 in C minor Op.8 (1923) [13:40]

Maurice RAVEL (1875-1937)

Piano Trio in A minor (1914) [28:32]

Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)

Piano Trio No.2 in E minor Op.67 (1944) [25:43]

Smetana Trio (Jiří Vodička (violin), Jan Páleníček (cello), Jitka Čechová (piano))

rec. Martinek Studio Prague, Czech Republic 19-22 September, 11-14 December 2013

SUPRAPHON SU 4145-2 [68:11]

This is a top-notch disc containing two of the twentieth century's great Piano Trios superbly performed and very well recorded. The Smetana Trio celebrates its eightieth anniversary in 2014 but has had many changes of personnel over the years. The key thing is that the current group uphold if not surpass the musical ideal and technical excellence of its predecessors.

Programming the Ravel Trio between Shostakovich's student Op.8 and mature masterpiece Op.67 is as interesting as it is unexpected. As so often with fine players, they find unexpected linkages musically and expressively as well as producing stunningly fine 'stand-alone' performances. Shostakovich's early C minor trio in one movement is an odd work. He used it – originally entitled *Poème* – as his entrance exam work for the Moscow Conservatory which he saw as being more progressive

than the St. Petersburg counterpart. The fact that it feels like a torso is probably due the reason that all he needed was a single movement in sonata-form so that is all he wrote. Jump forward two years and two opus numbers and you reach his extraordinary graduation work – the Symphony No.1, surely the work in which the true genius of Shostakovich is first fully revealed.

That is not to say the early trio is without interest, not at all. It is just that it is a strange mish-mash of styles and influences; some original, some almost comic in the degree of plagiarism. My guess is that even at that young age Shostakovich was experimenting with irony and satire as well as po-faced farce. From the very opening bars the Smetana Trio's playing oozes class and sophistication. The degree of unanimity in their playing is truly exceptional yet at the same time they are three clearly defined musical personalities. Violinist



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Jiří Vodička has a fantastically fluent technique and a very wide expressive range. His playing is the most impulsive and overtly flamboyant. Within the space of just a few bars he can change from intensely romantic – fast, febrile vibrato and expressive portamenti – to bitingly modernist and aggressive. Jan Páleníček's cello playing offsets this superbly, sober yet intense, less voluptuous but still with a wide tonal range. Between the two extremes sits Jitka Čechová's superbly poised and articulate piano playing. In every sense she helps bind the trio together, allying herself to whichever of her colleagues demands it most at any given moment.

The very opening of the disc demonstrates all these virtues; over Čechová's gently pulsing accompaniment, violin and cello share a lamenting descending theme. However, by the minute mark the composer, tiring already of such lachrymose lyricism ups the pace with one of those dancing light-footed melodies that seem to imply something dark and rather malicious hiding in the shadows. Hear how Vodička moves from an almost 'old-fashioned' style – same finger shifts sliding into notes and an intense vibrato – to an altogether modern clear and articulate approach. Páleníček matches but wisely does not try to outdo his colleague with Čechová's piano lifting the tempo and urging the music forward. I suppose it is the sheer range of style and expression that Shostakovich crams into this sub fifteen minute work that confounds. No musical section or mood is allowed to establish itself before it seems to be swept away with something in complete opposition. The Smetana Trio, as well as any group I have ever heard, manages to bind the work together into some form of coherence. That said, few except the composer's greatest die-hard supporters would argue that it is more than a work of huge potential.

The Supraphon engineering is really excellent. No matter how fine the players, achieving a realistic yet musically satisfying balance between

three such disparate instruments is very hard. This strikes me as pretty much ideal. Each instrument sounds very beautiful on its own yet the combination of all three remains believable and clear.

Both Ravel and Shostakovich were in their late thirties and at the height of their powers when they wrote the mature piano trios represented on this disc. Both are in four movements, with the scherzo placed second and the slow movement third. Again in both cases this slow movement is built from material set out by the piano in its lower register. The Ravel is explicitly called a *Passacaglia* while the Shostakovich is in a similar form although not so called. The liner-note elaborates how Ravel took material and inspiration from an incomplete piano concerto based on Basque themes and integrated them into this work. What a marvellous piece it is, fluent and elegant although no fragile figurine of a work. For sure, each player's part is calculated and refined but at the same time there is plenty of sinew and muscle not far below the beautiful exterior. Vodička deploys his expressive slides occasionally in places I find a little surprising but this is such beautiful and accomplished playing that criticism seems rather petty. Where the Smetanas are particularly successful is in binding the long paragraphs together. This gives the music a sense of logical development and evolution – something the young Shostakovich had yet to learn in his Op.8.

Apparently the subtitle of the second movement 'Pantoum' refers to a Malaysian verse form but Ravel never explained the connection. Suffice to say that the Smetana performance is full of fantasy and ebb and flows like sunlight sparkling on water. This is technically complex music anyway and to achieve such a unanimous sense of fluent rubato is exceptional. This serves to emphasise just what a 'modern' work this is. Underneath the bonnet of the conventional four movement form Ravel works at breaking down meter, rhythm and harmony – creating a revolution from within tradition that is as powerful

as it is impressive. The Smetana Trio's great skill, by pushing the expressive boundaries is to produce a compelling and daring interpretation. Some might prefer something more decorous but I find this 'Ravel unleashed' approach very convincing.

The same values apply through the remainder of the trio from the poise of the passacaglia to the glittering brilliance of the finale. Listen to the stunning precision of this latter movement (tr. 5) to get a sense of the extraordinary level of skill these players bring to the score. There is a symphonic scale to this writing; no surprise that Yan Pascal Tortelier orchestrated the work. Often it can seem in performance that this scale can overwhelm the form. Not here, the Smetana Trio play with attack and marvelous abandon such that the work emerges as the masterpiece it undoubtedly is.

Much the same can be said of Shostakovich's great Second Piano Trio. His particular skill – especially heard in immediate conjunction with the complex Ravel – is to achieve remarkable musical and emotional effects with far sparser textures. This is still an exceptionally hard work to perform but 'on the page' the demands made of the players are considerably less. For many years I have had an especial affection for the Borodin Trio's performance on Chandos – logically coupled with the same composer's great Piano Quintet. The Borodins, through their legendary leader Rostislav Dubinsky, can legitimately claim to know the workings of the composer's mind. Certainly this recording continues to have enormous emotional power and visceral impact. *However*, this new interpretation – very different at nearly every turn from the Borodins – is exceptionally impressive. To get a sense of the difference in approach one has to look no further than the opening pages. Shostakovich plays an immediate aural trick by having the cellist play glassy harmonics. These sound at a higher register than the violin's 'normal'

notation that enters six bars later in a kind of spectral canon. Dubinsky echoes the style of the cello part on his violin – little or no vibrato and a hollowed-out tone. Vodička contrasts strongly the cello writing with warm and expressive playing on the violin's lowest string and a fast and febrile vibrato. The score simply indicates that it is to be played muted and quietly. Both players do exactly this – but with vastly differing effects. The truth is I like both versions but possibly Vodička sets up a greater sense of 'range' in this material. Generally the Smetana performance is lighter on its feet – this is not simply a question of tempo although they are closer to the score's markings – than the spiritually heavier Borodins. Čechová has a subtler range of expressive colours in her musical palette. Luba Edlina for the Borodins is more weighty but still impressive.

Opus numbers are often particularly revelatory when considering Shostakovich's work. This trio with Op.67 places it between the bleakly powerful Symphony No.8 and the defiantly coquettish No.9. It is adjacent to the String Quartet No.2 which marks the start of the composer's fascination with that form in particular and chamber music in general. It endured for the remainder of his life. Is it too much of a leap to hear in this trio a bridging of the gap between the symphonic power of the large-scale orchestral works on one hand and the private compulsions that drove the quartets? Certainly the presence of the piano creates an 'engine room' that gives the work an expressive scale and impact that would seem impossible in just three instruments. All the mature Shostakovich fingerprints are evident from simple folkish melodies that, over long musical paragraphs, build inexorably to towering climaxes. These trite melodies transform into something altogether more nightmarish. While bleak landscapes offer little but chilled vistas and a sense of hopeless fatalism.

I had to do a double-take checking Shostakovich's metronome marking for

the second movement *Allegro con brio*. It is a finger-breaking dotted minim (half-note) = 132. This means you are expected to play around 13 notes *per second*. The Smetana Trio come as close as any group to that mark – surely the composer's metronome was as faulty as Beethoven's – playing at around 110 beats per minute. This allies the movement to that genre of nightmarish scherzo that the composer made his own. Not only is this a technical *tour de force* but they create that disconcerting madly manic glee. This makes for a hyper-active dance of death – as impressive as it is disturbing. Quite quite brilliant. The Borodins again choose a wholly different interpretative path – perhaps they knew something the rest of us don't. In any event they're way off the marking at 82 beats per minute. The music takes on something altogether more inexorable becoming an implacable juggernaut. The slower speed allows heavier accenting in the piano and a bow stroke more glued to the string. The mercurial Smetanas are sensational but the Borodins demand attention too. Between these polar extremes sits a third version I know from Trio Wanderer. Recorded in 2003 on Harmonia Mundi, this French group couple the two Shostakovich pieces with the Copland Trio *Vitebsk*. In its own right this is another fine performance and one that in isolation is well played and rewarding. Their scherzo is played around 96 beats per minute. Its consciously rougher than the Smetanas but not as weighty in spirit as the Borodins. Personally I find either extreme more interesting than this good but not revelatory middle path. Much the same comment applies to their entire performance.

Perhaps the Borodin approach pays greatest dividends in the doom-laden *Largo*. Edlina lays down large implacable slabs of chords over which Dubinsky laments. Again the metronome markings seem wildly 'off'.

The score I have has a crochet/quarter note at 112 with each bar containing six such beats. The Borodin crotchet is down around 68. I do not want to fixate too much about metronome markings – they should always be a guide to performers and listeners alike - not an absolute. This is a case in point, the Borodin performance feels thoroughly authentic and wholly impressive regardless. That being said the Smetana Trio are excellent, less unremittingly bleak than the Borodins but thereby creating more of an emotional journey. This is especially true of the finale. One of those disconcertingly clownish melodies that Shostakovich could conjure up at will starts the proceedings. The Smetana are easily the best of the three groups I compared at finding the humour – initially at least – that this music must have. By emphasising this characteristic when the same material twists and distorts, sours and curdles as the movement progresses the loss of naïve high spirits seems even darker and more poignant. A madly fluttering piano passage – the only overtly virtuosic writing for the keyboard in the work – is heard under which the strings revisit the work's opening themes. The composer here compresses reminiscences of much of the material of the entire work into a strangely emotionally neutral coda. The work ends in a tonally unambiguous E major. Yet as with the close of Eighth Symphony he manages to invest something that is tonally 'clear' with a sense of clouded emotion. Again the Smetanas are brilliantly adept at handling these contradictions and paradoxes. It makes a superb end to a profoundly impressive recital.

An informative liner-note in a good quality booklet in English, German, French and Czech completes a high quality presentation.

This is a disc to reinforce the stature of both the music performed and its executants.

smetana trio

INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW

May 2014



Smetana Trio

Lenka Hatašová

The Complete Piano Trios

New

Ravel Piano Trio in A minor.

Shostakovich Piano Trios – No. 1 in C minor, Op. 8; No. 2 in E minor, Op. 67. Smetana Trio (Jiří Vodička, violin; Jan Páleníček, cello; Jitka Cechová, piano).

Supraphon SU4145-2 (full price, 1 hour 8 minutes).

Website www.supraphon.com. Producer Milan Puklický. Engineer Jan Lžičář. Dates September 19th-22nd and December 11th-14th, 2013.

Comparisons:

Ravel:

Trio di Trieste (DG) 477 0302 (1959, five discs, deleted, available as a download)

Shostakovich Piano Trio No. 2:

Argerich, Kremer, Maisky (DG) 459 326-2 (1998)

The Smetana Trio has produced a number of excellent discs for Supraphon, including Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Dvořák and Smetana. Now this magnificent ensemble has turned its attention to the trios by Ravel and Shostakovich.

The disc opens with the Piano Trio No. 1 by Shostakovich, completed in 1923 when he was still in his teens. Dedicated to Tatyana Glivenko (with whom he'd fallen passionately in love), this 'Poème', as it was originally called, is a single movement filled with a romantic spirit and reflects the influence of composers such as Scriabin and Glazunov. This Trio can sometimes seem rather a rambling piece, but such is the conviction and intensity of this new Smetana Trio performance here that any doubts are swept aside, and the ardent sincerity of the music shines through.

Shostakovich's Piano Trio No. 2 is a very different kind of work – and a much better-known one. First performed in 1944, and

dedicated to the memory of Shostakovich's friend Ivan Sollertinsky, one of its many striking features is the introduction of Jewish themes – a bold move in Stalin's Soviet Union in wartime. Again, the Smetana Trio performance is exceptionally accomplished and captures the raw emotions of this music with almost graphic power, while not neglecting its dark, wry humour and always remaining controlled. It's an engrossing performance, and one that deserves a place towards the top of any list of recommendations. The live version by Martha Argerich, Gidon Kremer and Mischa Maisky on DG is an exceptional experience but the Smetana Trio runs them close in terms of sheer intensity.

The Ravel Trio is another work that has been recorded many times, though the 1959 set by the Trio di Trieste is still the version to which I return most often for its ideal combination of warmth, colour, luminous textures and exciting pacing. More than half a century later, the Smetana Trio comes close to matching that miraculous old record thanks to the seemingly effortless attention to detail of all three players, a thrilling sense of direction and a lightness of touch that ensures that the 'Pantoum' never becomes too heavy – a problem with many performances (the other all too common failing is frankly a less than complete grasp of the technical demands of this movement). The rest of the work is just as impressive: the finale is really exultant, with all Ravel's glittering colours shining brilliantly and vibrantly. The Smetana Trio also knows how and when to take its time in the first and third movements – the steadily growing power of the 'Passacaille' is captured superbly. This exceptionally fine new version of the Ravel is certainly now one of my favourites among more recent accounts.

With decent notes and sumptuous recorded sound, this is a disc that triumphantly confirms the pre-eminence of this marvellous Czech ensemble, and I recommend it very warmly.

Nigel Simeone

smetana trio

The New York Times

April 25, 2013

Classical Music/Opera Listings for April 26-May 2

Smetana Trio (Sunday) This ensemble, founded in 1934 by the Czech pianist Josef Palenicek, offers a program with Brahms's Piano Trio in C (Op. 87); Dvorak's "Dumky" Trio; and the Piano Trio in D minor "Quasi una Balata" by Vitezslav Novak, a Czech composer who died in 1949. At 5 p.m., Frick Collection, 1 East 70th Street, Manhattan, (212) 547-0715, frick.org; sold out, but museum visitors can listen by a sound system in the Garden Court. (Schweitzer)



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Harmonie

March 2013

Johannes Brahms' five piano trios rank not only among the most important pieces in his legacy as a composer, but among the crowning works of all romantic chamber music. They place exceptionally high demands on the performers in terms of both technique and expression, and only the most experienced of ensembles can venture to take on a complete recording of them. The Smetana Trio has extensive experience with the interpretation of romantic music. Their CDs with the piano trios of Dvořák, Smetana, and Tchaikovsky have gained international acclaim, and this Brahms project is further convincing proof that romantic music manifestly suits these musicians. Right from the first movement of the C Minor Trio, which opens the recording and which is probably the most highly emotive of the entire collection, the performance of the interpreters is completely riveting. From then on the listener remains completely in the thrall of Brahms' music and as time goes on falls under its spell more and more. Each movement has its own unique and delicately nuanced atmosphere; in each movement it is as though more and more new insights into Brahms' astonishing musical world are opening

up before us. Jitka Čechová, Jana Vonášková-Nováková, and Jan Páleníček play Brahms with exceptional understanding. In every note and every phrase we feel that this composer is close to the hearts of the performers and that they are on the same wavelength as him. The way all three interpreters play together is perfect, even in the most sensitive passages. Particular admiration is aroused by the fact that in spite of their emotiveness the artists approach Brahms with immense artistic humility. The Smetana Trio also made a particularly happy choice of interpreters for the wind parts. Both the clarinetist Ludmila Peterková and the horn player Přemysl Vojta are among the best Czech musicians in their fields, and with the Brahms trios they have shown once again that they have a masterly command of their instruments. Their tonal qualities and feel for chamber music are truly admirable, and thanks to them the two Brahms trios acquire not only striking new colours, but also new nuances of mood. This unique Brahms project is accompanied by a very attractive text by Vlasta Reittererová, and in addition it has very interesting artwork.



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SÜDWEST PRESSE

August 9, 2012

Sombre Music in a Warm Hall

The Smetana Trio gave a guest performance in Schwäbisch Hall as part of the Hohenlohe Cultural Summer. The piano trio gave a convincing performance of works by Dvořák, Brahms, and Novák in the full and very warm Adolf-Würth-Saal.

By Chris Wohlmuth

The Czech Smetana Trio is a chamber music ensemble that is rich in tradition: this piano trio has been in existence since 1934. The current line-up of Jitka Čechová, piano, Jan Páleníček, cello, and Jiří Vodička, violin, presented works from the late 19th century to the audience in the Würth arts hall on Sunday.

The three composers on the programme, Vítězslav Novák, Antonín Dvořák, and Johannes Brahms, have a feature in common: their publisher Fritz Simrock. The music fits well together in terms of style: the three works are linked by a sombre, heavy, basic mood. Novák's Pinao Trio no. 2 in D Minor, op. 27, "Quasi una balata" demonstrates this melancholy tone. The composer, a pupil of Dvořák, always had an interest in traditional folk music. This can be heard in the work. There are some nice contrasts between the andante tragico and an allegro part. The violin playing of Jiří Vodička is in the forefront; it has beautiful, emotive lines, and integrates itself well into the warm overall sound of the Trio. The young Czech Jiří Vodička already won a number of prizes in music competitions in his early years. Since 2009 he has been teaching at the Prague Conservatory.

The next piece, the "Dumky" Piano Trio in E Minor, op. 90, provides more opportunity for the other instruments in the Trio. The work is not a piano trio in the classical sense. In its six, rather than

four, movements Dvořák works with Slavonic folk songs. Contrasting slow, melancholy, and swift and lively sections follow one another. However, the piece never loses its basic dark mood. In the allegro vivace of the first movement Jan Páleníček's cello presents the theme. The Czech cellist is a much sought-after soloist and son of the composer and founder of the Smetana Trio Josef Páleníček.

In the fourth movement is the violin once more, at times plucked, at times with a constantly repeating pattern, like the ticking of clockwork.

The sixth and final movement is dominated by a short, wild motif. This is passed on from instrument to instrument and wanders through the keys.

Jitka Čechová at the piano remains mostly in the background but nevertheless forms an important part of the Trio, for she creates the framework and the harmonious background for the other two instruments, which have more of a solo role.

Čechová received her musical education at the Prague Conservatory and also, among other places, in Freiburg.

After Brahms's Second Piano Trio in C Major, op. 87, the applause of the enthusiastic Schwäbisch Hall audience brought two encores: an impressive jazz-style piece and the leisurely "Elegy" by Josef Suk, husband of Dvořák's daughter.



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May 21, 2012

The Smetana Trio in St. Agnes' Convent

Whoever was unable to get to the BBC concert conducted in the Rudolfinum concert hall in Prague on 21 May by Jiří Bělohlávek, currently principal conductor of the BBC orchestra and future principal conductor of the Czech Philharmonic, had another possibility. At the same time, a concert was taking place in St. Agnes' Convent that was no less interesting, although being more chamber music in character. The Smetana Trio, one of our most prestigious chamber ensembles, with an international reputation, was performing a programme of works by Brahms. We should add that it also included a pinch of very interesting spice in the middle and a real treat at the end in the form of the encore. But let's be more specific:

The Smetana Trio, made up of artists who often perform as soloists as well, is known primarily for its romantic repertoire, which suits it extremely well. This also applies to the two main works performed at this concert, Johannes Brahms' Piano Trio in C Major, op. 87, which was played at the beginning, and the Trio no. 1 in B Major, op. 8, by the same composer, which brought the programme to a close. These two trios were written at the beginning (op. 8) and the end (op. 87) of Brahms' career as a composer, and thus offered an interesting comparison.

Jitka Čechová played her piano with ease of touch and technical brilliance, and conjured with our emotions. Similarly, Jana Vonášková-Nováková's violin, as always, linked and interwove with the other instruments with its melodious tone and beautiful timbre. Jan Páleníček's cello added the final colouring to the authentic full sound of Brahms' music.

Some unexpected spice was added to the programme with a composition by the American jazz composer and pianist Chick Corea. "Opus Addendum", which belongs to his "classical music oeuvre", but still contains some jazz elements, was an excellent way of lightening the Brahms theme in the middle of the programme.

It also provided Jitka Čechová, supported by the other members of the Trio, with the opportunity not only to display a different type of interpretational mastery, but also to be symbolically "reincarnated". Especially for this piece she appeared on stage in trousers and a very becoming man's hat, just like Chick Corea does. A minor but excellent dramaturgical idea, which raised the Prague Spring festival atmosphere to a slightly higher and more elegant level.

And what was the treat at the end mentioned earlier – the encore after thunderous applause? It was the final



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movement of Bohuslav Martinů's Trio, which the Smetana Trio have had in their repertoire for some years now. Since the ensemble introduced the piece, its interpretation has evidently undergone a considerable process of development, so that those who were

able to compare the already excellent earlier version with the present one were constantly astonished at how it was possible to continue working on this magnificent music and at how far it could be developed in concert.

smetana trio

PRESTO
CLASSICAL

November 2010

Mendelssohn & Schubert - Piano Trios



After focusing on the Czech trio literature (on highly acclaimed recordings ranging from Dvorák to Martinu) and paying a visit to Tchaikovsky (SU 3949-2), the Smetana Trio has turned to the very heart of the Romantic repertoire for their newest album. Both of the pieces on this disc rank among the most frequently played trios; in both of them, the composers succeeded in striking a rare balance in the texture as well as in the instrumentation, placing all three instruments on an even footing. The success of the Schubert trio, which makes use of Swedish folk melodies, is attested to by the fact that it was the only one of the composer's works to be published abroad during his lifetime.

Coincidentally the piece received Robert Schumann's highest praise in his comment on the Mendelssohn trio: "It is a contemporary masterpiece, a work such as Beethoven's trios were in their day, or Schubert's Trio in E flat Major, a very beautiful composition which still pleases grandchildren and great-grandchildren years afterwards." Both pieces find excellent performers in the Smetana Trio, with its sense of ensemble playing. In Schumann's words, may Mendelssohn and Schubert "still please grandchildren and greatgrandchildren years afterwards" on this recording as well.



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October 12, 2009

The Smetana Trio at the Chalon Conservatory

On Tuesday evening the Chalon Conservatory gave the public the opportunity to enjoy a performance by the Smetana Trio, which is a real musical gem. The trio of virtuosos – Jitka Cechová, Jana Vonaskova-Nováková and Palenicek– opened the concert with a captivating work by Mozart, full of joy, life, and playfulness. Mozart must certainly have enjoyed composing it, and the musicians faithfully communicated his mood to us. They then offered the large audience a trio by the modern Czech composer Bohuslav Martinu, a darker work than the previous one, full of sudden changes and squalls. Its andante, with its resigned air, is however balanced by the lively

concluding allegro. From the applause that resounded through the hall it was clear that this part of the concert had really won over the audience. A beautiful composition by Bedrich Smetana from the 19th century then led them into the deepest and highest regions of the human soul. The atmosphere was uplifted by a huge surge of energy, and the perfectly coordinated Smetana Trio enchanted the audience with its amazing musical alchemy. The concert closed with a very joyful and playful composition by Joseph Haydn. It was a concert that was both outstanding and human.



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smetana trio

BBC
music

December 2008

A Tchaikovsky triumph

JAN SMACZNY *welcomes the Smetana's Russian venture*



DVOŘÁK

Piano Trio No. 2 in G minor, B 56

TCHAIKOVSKY

Piano Trio in A minor, Op. 50

Smetana Trio

Supraphon SU 3949-2 73:12 mins

BBC Music Direct

£13.99

It seems Tchaikovsky had cold feet about combining the sonorities of violin and cello with piano when prompted to write a piano trio by his generous patron Nadezhda von Meck. In the Trio he eventually composed in 1882 the textures do seem at times to yearn toward orchestral colouring, but there is so much that celebrates the joys of this intimate combination, in

particular in the theme and variation second movement. As a whole, this two-movement Trio is Tchaikovsky's most remarkable chamber work with a wealth of invention that cannot fail to impress: the broad opening melody of the first movement is one of the most purposeful, as well as ravishingly lyrical, he ever wrote.

The Smetana Trio responds with passion and intellectual engagement. The very start of the Trio compels attention: string solo lines have focus and a remarkable beauty of tone; Jitka Čechová's piano playing has both virtuosity and delicacy, displayed most notably in the colourful variations of the finale. All told these players make a completely convincing case for the work's structural integrity.

They are equally impressive in Dvořák's Piano Trio No. 2, the elegiac G minor. Although composed relatively early in his composing maturity, it foreshadows many aspects of his later, far better known chamber



INTEGRITY: the Smetana Trio bring beauty and coherence to Tchaikovsky

works. The Smetana Trio provides expressive, perceptive playing at every turn; for example, just try the *Scherzo* in which Beethovenian intensity melts effortlessly into Dvořák's

'Slavonic' manner. Excellently recorded, this performance is the current top choice.

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

RECORDING

★★★★★

smetana trio

GRAMOPHONE

Awards 2007

Dvořák • Fibich • Martinů

Dvořák Piano Trio No 1, B51 **Fibich** Piano Trio

Martinů Piano Trio No 2, H327

Smetana Trio (Jitka Cechová *pf*)

Jana Vonášková-Nováková *vn* Jan Páleníček *vc*

Supraphon © SU3927-2 (60' • DDD)

Dvořák – selected comparison:

Borodin Trio (11/93) (CHAN) CHAN9172

Welcome rarities help turn this Czech collection into something inspired



The Smetanas, led by cellist Jan Páleníček, son of Josef Páleníček, one of the founders of the original Smetana Trio in 1931, give inspired, totally idiomatic performances of

these well contrasted Czech works. Much the most ambitious work is this first of Dvořák's four trios, written when he was 34 with his Czech idiom firmly established. The other trios, each barely 15 minutes long, are fascinating rarities.

The earliest of the three is that by Zdeněk Fibich, written in 1872 when he was only 21. With its positive ideas, starting with a bold opening gesture, the urgency of the outer movements very much reflects a young man's inspiration. It is all the more attractive in such a compact format, though the Czech flavours are not very strong. The first movement, warmly lyrical, ends with an exciting coda, while the energetic finale brings brilliant piano writing. The central slow movement is simple and songful, an *Adagio* under three minutes long which does not even boast a contrasting B section.

The Martinů dates from his last years, when his style had mellowed and become more traditional. Again the layout is fast-slow-fast, urgently purposeful in the first movement and with a *moto perpetuo* main theme in the finale. The slow movement has some gritty writing in the middle with one weird, hushed passage in which the violin plays in an ethereal *pianissimo*.

The Dvořák is on quite a different scale, though this performance, unlike that of the Borodin Trio, omits the exposition repeat in the first movement. That is no great loss, when it is already longer than any of the other three movements. The Smetanas give a wonderfully refined performance which is yet strong and energetic. They bring an attractive lightness to the third-movement *Allegretto scherzando* and a fine swagger in the finale, again light and sparkling. Altogether an impressive disc, very well recorded. **Edward Greenfield**



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November 24, 2007

The Telegraph

Dvořák: Piano Trio in B flat major Op 21.

Fibich: Piano Trio in F minor.

Martinů: Piano Trio No 2 in D minor

Smetana Trio

Supraphon SU 3927-2, £13.99

This is a worthy follow-up to the Smetana Trio's disc of Dvořák's two best-known piano trios released last year. The B flat major Piano Trio may be an early work, but there is ample sign of the mature Dvořák and, it must be said, more of a distinctive edge than the slightly earlier work by his younger contemporary, Fibich. Martinů's Second Trio sits well with these works, since it comes from his more conservative later years.

The players brings the mark of a great ensemble to all three pieces: unity of purpose combined with individuality of character. A delight. *MR*



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*The***Guardian**

October 12, 2007

**Dvorak/ Fibich/ Martinu: Piano
Trios, Smetana Trio**

By Tim Ashley

★★★★★(Supraphon)

The most striking work on the Smetana Trio's latest album is, paradoxically, probably the least well-known, namely the Piano Trio in F Minor by Zdenek Fibich (1850-1900). The most cosmopolitan of the major Czech composers, Fibich is best remembered for his operas and for his gravitation towards Wagner at a time when most of his compatriots were adopting folk-based idioms. His Trio is, however, a masterpiece of compression, wonderfully taut in its construction and densely written, so that none of the instrumentalists is allowed to dominate the others, despite the dramas that erupt between them.

The other two works don't have quite the same originality. Dvorak is represented by his Trio in B Flat Major, the first of four - melodically glorious, if somewhat piano dominated. Martinu's Second Trio, in D Minor, is pithy, neo-classical and, like too much of his music, variable in inspiration. The performances are faultless: the Dvorak is done with exuberant grandeur, the other two Trios with a concentrated precision that gives the impression that the three players are functioning as an indivisible unit.



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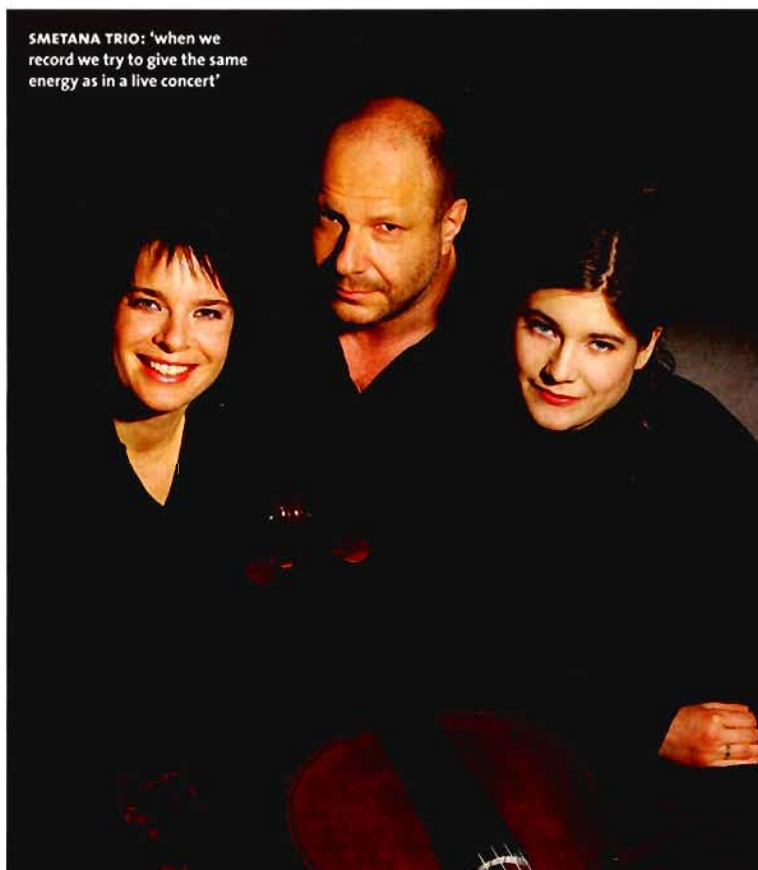
BBC
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BBC Awards 2007

CHAMBER AWARD

SMETANA TRIO

With their razor-sharp attention to every musical nuance, the Czech-based Smetana Trio showcase the music of Dvořák



SMETANA TRIO: 'when we record we try to give the same energy as in a live concert'



DVOŘÁK – PIANO TRIOS NO. 4 'DUMKY'; NO. 3 IN F MINOR
Smetana Trio: Jitka Čechová (piano), Jana Vonášková (violin), Jan Páleníček (cello)
Supraphon SU 3872-2 £13.99

WHAT THE JURY SAID:

'The Smetana Trio are wonderfully attuned to Dvořák's musical language, responding to every expressive nuance with incredible insight and emotional intensity. In their hands these well-worn mainstays of the chamber repertoire sound as fresh and original as they must have done when the composer first brought them before the public.'

THE SMETANA TRIO is in its prime, says pianist Jitka Čechová – and they couldn't be happier that their hard work has paid off. 'We understand each other so well musically, and are very happy that our work has been perceived so well not only by music specialists but also the larger musical audience. When we were told about the award, the first feeling was of great satisfaction. We take it in honour of the Czech Chamber School; we would like to continue in its tradition.' The award winning CD is appropriately nationalistic, having been written by Czech composer Dvořák and performed with him playing piano in its Prague premier on 11 April 1891. Energy, a gripping emotional range and

flawless technique are just a few things that come to mind on listening to the Smetana Trio's recording of the Trios in F minor, Op. 65 and No. 4, Op. 90, or the 'Dumky' ('fleeting thoughts'). Crisp, determined passages contrast with moments of sublime legato, where bowing is so flawless that the cello's and violin's interlocking melodies melt into one inseparable whole. The three performers listen to each other so acutely that, if you were at a live performance, you'd be afraid to breath for fear of interrupting; each member of the trio responds to the tiniest musical nuance. 'We have a unified interpretation of the music that we play, but every concert we insert new details and ideas. Every time we perform it is a new

'We think these two trios belong to the top of the trio repertoire'

experience for us – the same wonderful music, but music that you can build on every time you play it.' They live the music and you can't help but to live it with them.

So what does this recording mean to the Trio? 'We are at our happiest playing in front of an audience, so when we record we try to give the same energy as in a live concert', says Čechová. 'All the recordings we have made until now happened with a wonderful team of people: the music director, the sound director, the piano tuner and so on worked in great harmony. It was a good experience and I hope that people can hear this in the recording. We think that these two trios belong to the top of the trio repertoire, so it is a big pleasure to play them every time.' *The Smetana Trio are currently recording Dvořák's first piano trio, to be released on Supraphon later this year.*

OTHER CHAMBER NOMINEES

Shostakovich: String Quartets Nos 3, 7 & 8.

Hagen Quartet. DG 477 6146

Mendelssohn: Bruch Octet in E flat, Op. 20; Octet in B flat
Auer Quartet Naxos 8.557270

BACKGROUND TO...



Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)

His first attempts at writing piano trios in the 1870s did not survive contemporary criticism. But later efforts, especially those featured in this recording (1883–1884) were a great success.

The music stretches and expands the structure of the traditional piano trio, pushing it to its limits.



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smetana trio



October 2006



Dvořák

**Piano Trio in E minor,
Op.90 'Dumky'; Piano Trio
in F minor, Op.65**

Smetana Trio

The Dumky Trio's six movements form one of Dvořák's most carefree and appealing works ('Dumky' is the plural form of 'dumka', a Slavic folk tune with sharply contrasted expressive and rhythmical passages).

With its passionate outer movements and meditative central sections, the F minor Trio is, likewise, awash with Dvořák's unending melodic freshness. The Smetana Trio has these works in its blood, and the burnished cello tone of Jan Páleníček, Jana Vonášková-Nováková's velvety violin and Jitka Čechová's airy, graceful pianism blend magically well together. With first-class recording quality, the Smetana's must now be the preferred version in both these works.

Supraphon SU3872-2

Jeremy Nicholas

smetana trio



June 16, 2006

Dvorák: Trios/Smetana Trio

By David Hurwitz



Artistic Quality: 10

Sound Quality: 10

This is the Smetana Trio playing Dvorák, not to be confused with the Dvořák Trio playing Smetana. Such is life in the world of Czech chamber music. But seriously, Supraphon alone has an abundance of recordings of these works, and no wonder. The F minor and Dumky trios probably are the two finest works in the trio medium from the second half of the 19th century, and they make ideal disc-mates, one a sort of apotheosis of Dvorák's work in traditional forms, the

other an innovative and path-breaking essay in his popular nationalist idiom. This stupendous new recording rivals the celebrated Suk Trio interpretations for the same label both in technical mastery and interpretive insight; in short, it is second to none.

The program opens with the Dumky Trio, and right from the start you can tell that this is going to be a great performance. Passion and spontaneity unite with rhythmic precision and a real feeling for the dance. Listen to the natural rubato in the fourth movement that prevents the recurring march rhythms from ever turning stiff or mechanical (and notice how much this music resembles the finale of Shostakovich's Second Trio). I loved the lightness of rhythm in the next piece: so often its skipping 6/8 rhythm becomes an excuse to create a chamber version of Wagner's descent into Nibelheim. Not here, where careful attention to dynamics and a flowing tempo create an effortless feeling of movement. There isn't a second in this performance where you feel the music should be played any other way, and no praise can be higher than that.

If anything, these qualities are even more evident in the great F minor trio. The players fling themselves into the first movement with almost dangerous abandon—but notice how perfectly in



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tune the opening octaves are, and how perfectly balances are maintained even in the most turbulent episodes in the development section. As in the previous work, the scherzo benefits from the ensemble's rhythmic acuity; but it's the slow movement that's really special here. It's not only beautifully paced and phrased, but the ensemble obviously took as much care with transitions as with the melodies, and the result has a seamless continuity that belies the impression in less-adept performances of a movement consisting of a disjointed stream of incredibly pretty tunes.

In the finale, happily taking Dvorák's "con brio" admonition literally, the ensemble sails into the coda with such

enthusiasm that the music seems self-propelled. The final turn to the major in the coda is absolutely thrilling, and the closing bars offer the ultimate in musical satisfaction. I started listening to this disc with the slow movement, thinking to sample a bit here and there, but the playing was so gripping that I played the disc through to the end, then went back and listened again from the beginning. It's that good, and the sonics have a true-to-life immediacy that permits these spellbinding interpretations to register with maximum impact. Without question, this is a very great recording, an essential acquisition whether you already love this music or just want to get to know it better.

smetana trio

BBC
music

August 2005

CHAMBER CHOICE

Triple win for Czech trio

JAN SMACZNY *finds not a single weak link in this programme*



SMETANA

Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 15

SUK

Piano Trio in C minor, Op. 2

NOVÁK

Trio in D minor quasi una ballata, Op. 27

Smetana Trio

Supraphon SU 3810-2 63:44 mins. £ £ £

With venerable roots stretching back to the 1930s, the Smetana Trio is soaked in the traditions of Czech chamber music. Its present membership is, of course, of much more recent vintage and all display the innovative tendencies of many

of the younger Czech chamber groups. This is notably to the fore in the choice of companion pieces to the Smetana Trio: rather than going for familiar repertoire, they include Suk's early C minor trio and Novák's magnificent one-movement trio 'Quasi una ballata'.

Their reading of the first movement of the Smetana Piano Trio is one of the most satisfyingly dramatic I have heard on disc, while the string voicing in the elegiac second trio of the scherzo – the emotional heart of a work which mourns the death of the composer's daughter Bedřiska – is quite simply exquisite. They are equally at home in the astonishingly accomplished Suk trio, written when he was only 15 and surprisingly untouched by Dvořák's influence. Novák's turbulently passionate trio is also



SMETANA TRIO: outstanding in works by their namesake and two others

given a masterly reading which maintains a clear sense of trajectory throughout. In a recording which is both realistic and vibrant, these performances are a magnificent

tribute to the excellent state of Czech chamber music today.

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

SOUND

★★★★



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Smetana Trio Discography

Supraphon

- SU 4288-2 **Beethoven: Piano Trios:** Piano Trio in C minor, Op. 1 No. 3; Piano Trio in B flat major, Op. 97, the "Archduke Trio"; Piano Trio in D major, Op. 70 No. 1, the "Ghost Trio"; Piano Trio in E flat major, Op. 70 No. 2
- SU 4258-2 **Zemlinsky, Rachmaninov, Arensky: Piano Trios:** Alexander Zemlinsky: Piano Trio in D minor, Op. 3; Sergei Rachmaninoff: Trio élégiaque No. 1 in G minor; Anton Arensky (1861-1906): Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 32
- SU 4197-2 **Martinů: The Complete Piano Trios:** Bohuslav Martinů: Piano Trio N° 3 in C major H 332; Bergerettes, H. 275; Piano Trio No. 2 in D Minor, H. 327; Piano Trio No. 1, H. 193
- SU 4145-2 **Ravel / Shostakovich: Complete Piano Trios (2014):** Dmitry Shostakovich – Piano Trio No. 1 in C minor, Op. 8; Piano Trio No. 2 in D minor, Op. 67. Maurice Ravel – Piano Trio in A minor.
- SU 4072-2 **Brahms: Complete Piano Trios (2012):** Johannes Brahms – Piano Trios No. 1 in B major, Op. 8; No. 2 in C major, Op. 87; No. 3 in C minor, Op. 101. Trio in E flat major for horn, violin and piano, Op. 40; Trio in A minor for clarinet, cello and piano, Op. 114
- SU 4008-2 **Mendelssohn: Piano Trio No. 1; Schubert: Piano Trio No. 2 (2010):** Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy – Piano Trio No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 49 (1839); Franz Schubert – Piano Trio No. 2 in E flat Major, Op. 100 (D. 929, 1827)
- SU 3949-2 131 **Tchaikovsky, Dvorak Piano Trios (2008):** Tchaikovsky – Piano Trio in a minor, Op. 50; Dvorak – Piano Trio No. 2 in g minor
- SU 3927-2 131 **Piano Trios - Dvorak / Fibich / Martinu (2007):** Dvorak - Piano Trio No. 1 in B flat; Fibich - Piano Trio in F minor; Martinu - Piano Trio in D minor
- SU 3872-2 131 **Dvorak Piano Trios (2005):** Piano Trios No. 3 in F minor, Op. 65, No. 4; "Dumky" in E minor, Op. 90
- SU 3810-2 131 **Smetana, Suk, Novák: Piano Trios (2005):** Smetana - Piano Trio in G minor; Suk - Trio for Piano, Violin and Cello in C minor, Op. 2; Elegie for Violin, Cello and Piano (Under the Impression of Zeyer's Vysehrad), Op. 23; Novak - Trio for Piano, Violin and Cello in D moll, Quasi una ballata, Op. 27

Cube Bohemia

- CBCD2740 **Triple Concertos – Beethoven/ Voříšek (2007):** Ludwig van Beethoven - Triple Concerto Op. 56; Jan Václav Voríšek - Grand Rondeau Op. 25

**Smetana Trio
Sample Programs**Program I

Sergei Rachmaninoff
Trio élégiaque No. 1 in G minor

Bohuslav Martinů
Piano Trio No. 3 in C Major, H. 332
I. Allegro moderato
II. Andante
III. Allegro

-----interval-----

Bedřich Smetana
Piano Trio in G minor, Op 15
I. Moderato assai
II. Allegro ma non agitato
III. Finale. Presto

Program II

Dmitri Shostakovich
Piano Trio No. 1 in C minor, Op. 8

Anton Arensky
Piano Trio No.1, Op.32
I. Allegro moderato
II. Scherzo: Allegro molto
III. Elegia: Adagio
IV. Finale: Allegro molto

-----interval-----

Antonín Dvořák
Piano Trio No.3, Op.65
I. Allegro ma non troppo
II. Allegretto grazioso
III. Poco adagio
IV. Finale. Allegro con brio



SMETANA TRIO REPERTOIRE

Chamber Repertoire

L. van Beethoven

Trio in C minor Op. 1 No. 3
Allegro con brio
Andante cantabile con variazioni
Menuetto
Finale: prestissimo

Trio in D major Op. 70, No. 1 "Geister-Trio"
Allegro vivace con brio
Largo assai ed espressivo
Presto

Trio in B major Op. 97, No. 7 "Archducal"
Allegro moderato
Scherzo. Allegro
Andante cantabile, ma pero con molto
Allegro moderato

Trio in B major Op. 11
Allegro con brio
Adagio
Tema con Variazioni

J. Brahms

Trio in C minor Op. 101
Allegro energico
Presto non assai
Andante grazioso
Allegro molto

P. Breiner

Trio
Allegro
Adagio cantabile
Allegro

A. Dvorák

Trio in D major Op. 21
Trio in F minor Op. 65
Allegro ma non troppo

Allegretto grazioso
Poco Adagio
Finale. Allegro con brio

Trio Op. 90, "Dumky"
Lento maestoso. Allegro, quasi doppio
movimento
Poco adagio. Vivace non troppo
Andante. Vivace non troppo
Andante moderato. Allegretto scherzando
Allegro
Lento maestoso. Vivace, quasi doppio
movimento

J. Haydn

Trio in G major "All' Ongarese"
Andante
Poco adagio
Finale. Rondo all' Ongarese

B. Martinu

Trio in D minor No. 2
Allegro moderato
Adagio
Allegro

W. A. Mozart

Trio in G major KV 564
Allegro
Andante con variazioni
Allegretto

Trio in D minor KV 442
Allegro
Andantino. Tempo di menuetto
Allegro

V. Novák

Trio quasi una ballata in D minor Op. 27

M. Ravel

Trio
Modéré
Pantoum
Passacaille
Final

D. Shostakovich

Trio No. 2 in E major Op. 67
Andante
Allegro con brio
Largo
Allegretto

F. Schubert

Trio in E Flat major Op. 100
Allegro
Andante con moto
Scherzo, Allegro moderato
Allegro moderato

Trio Op. 99 in B major

B. Smetana

Trio in G minor Op. 15
Moderato assai
Allegro, ma non agitato
Finale. Presto

J. Suk

Elegie op. 23
Trio in C minor Op. 2
Allegro
Andante
Vivace

Orchestral Repertoire

L. van Beethoven

Triple Concerto in C major

J. Brahms

Double Concerto in A minor for Violin and Cello

B. Martinu

Triple Concerto for Piano, Violin and Cello
Concertino
Double Concerto for Piano, Violin and Orchestra

F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

Double Concerto in D minor for Piano, Violin and Orchestra

A. Vivaldi

Double Concerto in B Flat major for Violin and Cello

J. V. H. Vorísek

Grand Rondeau for Piano Trio and Orchestra, Op. 25







