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DVOŘÁK

COMPLETE PIANO TRIOS

MACQUARIE TRIO AUSTRALIA



	CD1		
	Trio No. 1 in B-flat major for piano, violin and cello, Op. 21 (B51)		[64'15]
1	I. Allegro molto		[33'45]
2	II. Adagio molto e mesto		12'30
3	III. Allegretto scherzando		8'48
4	IV. Finale. Allegro vivace		6'38
			5'48
	Trio No. 2 in G minor for piano, violin and cello, Op. 26 (B56)		[30'26]
5	I. Allegro moderato		11'56
6	II. Largo		6'33
7	III. Scherzo		5'39
8	IV. Finale. Allegro vivace		6'09
	CD2		[73'44]
	Trio No. 3 in F minor for piano, violin and cello, Op. 65 (B130)		[41'35]
1	I. Allegro ma non troppo		14'06
2	II. Allegretto grazioso		6'55
3	III. Poco adagio		10'25
4	IV. Finale. Allegro con brio		10'08
	Dumky – Trio No. 4 in E minor for piano, violin and cello, Op. 90 (B166)		[31'56]
5	I. Lento maestoso – Allegro vivace –		4'22
6	II. Poco adagio – Vivace non troppo –		6'46
7	III. Andante – Vivace non troppo		6'34
8	IV. Andante moderato – Allegretto scherzando		5'11
9	V. Allegro		4'12
10	VI. Lento maestoso – Vivace		4'56
		Total Playing Time	137'48

Macquarie Trio Australia

'To have a fine idea,' Dvořák would say to his pupils, 'is nothing special. The idea comes of itself, and if it is a beautiful and great one, then that is not due to the man who gives it expression. But to realise an idea in a beautiful fashion and to make something great out of it, that is the most difficult thing, that is true art.'

When, in his 50th year, Dvořák was appointed Professor of Composition and Instrumentation at Prague Conservatory, he sought to impart his own belief that 'an artist too has a fatherland in which he must also have a firm faith and which he must love.' This deep loyalty to the Czech spirit bound together a lifetime of work for Dvořák who during much of his early career lived in the shadow cast by his fellow countryman, Bedřich Smetana.

Although ardently Czech in spirit, Dvořák, of all the Slav composers, can probably be placed closest to the Viennese tradition. He enjoyed a long friendship with Johannes Brahms, and indeed owed much of his initial success to Brahms' gentle championing. As one of the great melodists, Dvořák can easily stand alongside Schubert, whose own parents also hailed from Moravia and Bohemian Silesia. His study and knowledge of classical form was exhaustive; many decidedly Beethovenian qualities can be heard in the scherzo of his first piano trio.

Dvořák's two early piano trios, No. 1 in B-flat major and No. 2 in G minor, were written in the same period as his Fifth Symphony and his

opera *Vanda*. Both are four-movement works filled with individual, folk-like ideas. The **Piano Trio No. 1 in B-flat major** was composed during a flurry of activity in early 1875, along with his *Moravian Duets* for soprano and alto, his *Serenade for Strings* Op. 22 and his *String Quintet* in G major. Dvořák's soaring creative spirit is not surprising; he had just been granted the much coveted State Art Scholarship which the Austrian government awarded to 'young, poor and talented artists'.

Dvořák's First Piano Trio is a clear example of spontaneous melody meeting a pre-existing classical form. A serene, idyllic atmosphere is created at the opening of the *Allegro molto*. Dvořák uses syncopation to create a dance-like mood and several ostinati emphasise the dramatic structure. Melancholy, serene yet fervent, the *Adagio molto e mesto* echoes the church music of Handel. Each instrument has an initial opportunity to voice the main theme while the strings enjoy a beautiful duet. The *Allegretto scherzando* opens with a calm polka; dance-like figures are thrown between the three instruments, creating an increasing sense of exhilaration. A brief trio (which was added only after the premiere in 1877) brings respite, during which the cello has a rare opportunity to sing with the classical purity of Beethoven. A deliberately agitated conversation between the instruments opens the finale, an *Allegro vivace*. The rondo structure of this movement is quite simple, marked by the reappearance of the first theme in G minor and then by a slower

secondary episode in the piano. The premiere was given in Prague by the Slavkovský/Sládek/Ondříček trio on February 17.

Only eight months separate Dvořák's Second Piano Trio from his First, however during this short time he suffered both personal and professional tragedy. A promised public performance of his Fifth Symphony – dedicated to Hans von Bülow – never took place, and then in September of 1875, his daughter Josefa died after a struggle with life of just two days. Everything Dvořák wrote in 1876 was tinged with grief and sorrow – the String Quartet in E major and **Piano Trio No. 2 in G minor** are clear examples. His Second Piano Trio's hymn-like *Largo* contains exquisite moments of serenity and meditation, revealing itself as a prefiguration of the cantata *Stabat Mater*, a work which is arguably the highest expression of Dvořák's genius.

From the opening chords of the Second Trio's *Allegro moderato* comes a veiled atmosphere of lament. The main theme is presented in two episodes; the violin's initial theme contrasts with a second more rhythmic and pointed theme in the cello. A heart-breaking lament played by the cello represents the only melodic material presented in the *Largo*. Expressions of Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* can be heard as the initial lament transforms into a meditative hymn revealing serenity, consolation and trust. With the *Scherzo* comes a return to life. The music, more fractious than gay, passes rapidly between the extremes of dynamics. Suddenly the cello

breaks off into an impassioned, pensive outburst, all the more poignant because of its brevity. The intense, violent chords at the opening of the *Allegro vivace* expand on those announced in the *Allegro moderato*. This violent mood alternates with one of a more capricious nature demonstrated in a slow polka heard in the violin. The first performance of this trio was given on 29 June 1879 at the Turnov Musical Society by Ferdinand Lachner on violin, Alois Neruda on cello and Dvořák himself at the piano.

Dvořák did not allow his earlier personal trials to diminish his self-belief. He again applied to the Austrian state government for their scholarship. This time, Johannes Brahms was on the jury. After reading through Dvořák's *Moravian Duets*, Brahms wrote to his Berlin publisher Fritz Simrock: 'Play them through and you will like them as much as I do. As a publisher, you will be particularly pleased with their piquancy ... Dvořák has written all manner of things: operas, symphonies, quartets, piano pieces. In any case, he is a very talented man. Moreover, he is poor! I ask you to think about it!' This letter from Brahms, who soon formed a friendship with Dvořák, led to an avalanche of international publications and performances.

Can artists ever escape paying a price for sudden fame? Dvořák now found himself in a personal tug-of-war between his patriotic sentiments and the demands of German publishers, who asked for compositions

containing more universal elements. For him, this was a point of crisis during which he deeply explored a more 'Germanic', specifically Brahmsian sound and attempted to assimilate it with his loyalty to the Czech character. Of central importance to the resolution of this conflict was Dvořák's creation in 1883 of his **Piano Trio No. 3 in F minor**. This is Dvořák at his most Brahmsian. However, do not think of this masterpiece as only a 'successor' to Brahms; it still contains Dvořák's nationalist characteristics. Three other works were born from the resolution of this crisis: the Seventh Symphony, the orchestral *Scherzo Capriccioso* Op. 66 and a cantata based on the Czech fairy tale *The Spectre's Bride*.

Dvořák's Third Piano Trio, dark and elegiac in character, is obviously coloured by the loss of his beloved mother just a few months earlier. The *Allegro ma non troppo* opens with a powerful theme which contrasts strongly with a second of characteristically Slavic nature. The contrast here lies not so much in the character of the two themes, but in the structural binding; Dvořák uses Brahmsian techniques of variation and imitation to tighten the Slavic style. Probably the most recognisable movement of this trio is the *Allegro grazioso* which appears in place of a scherzo (again following Brahms' manner). String triplets provide a dance-like, rhythmic drive to the piano's gentle, rocking theme. Breadth and melodic inspiration confirm the *Poco adagio* as a premonition of the Seventh Symphony. Like the

slow movements of Dvořák's earlier trios, the main theme is introduced by solo cello with piano accompaniment. A secondary idea of just one bar is then heard in the violin and from these brief elements Dvořák creates a movement of exceptional expansiveness. In the finale, an *Allegro con brio*, two short themes form the basic elements of a sonata rondo. The energetic principal theme is in the style of a 'furiant', a Czech dance characterised by cross rhythms and off-beat accents, and the second theme has the character of a sedate waltz. The first performance was given at Mladá Boleslav on 27 October 1883 by Ferdinand Lachner on violin, Alois Neruda on cello, and Dvořák at the piano.

News of the success gained by Dvořák's publications in Germany soon spread to England. Although the English public had already heard the *Slavonic Dances* and the Third Rhapsody, it was not until 1883, when Joseph Barnby conducted a performance of the *Stabat Mater*, that they wished to see Dvořák himself. The timing was perfect; in London, away from the political pressure to avoid the nationalist elements of his music, he was free to premiere distinctly Czech works (*The Spectre's Bride* and the Czech legend *St Ludmilla*). Continuing fame brought Dvořák awards and offers from several universities in England and on the continent. It was just after he accepted the Professorship at Prague Conservatory that he wrote his Dumky Trio.

Dvořák's **Fourth Piano Trio** presents the music in a highly novel structure: six Dumky pieces in six different keys. As a chamber work it finds its orchestral parallel in the *Slavonic Dances* – both works are stylised creations on Slavonic folk themes. The 'Duma' and 'Dumka' are historically songs of lament originating from the Slavic nations. They were performed either by men as ballad-like narratives (the Duma) or by women as melancholy, plaintive songs (the Dumka). The folk-like instrumental Dumky were developed from these vocal origins in the late 19th century primarily by Dvořák and his gifted follower Leoš Janáček. They characteristically have quickly contrasting sections.

The most common combination of contrasting tempi is slow-fast-slow-fast, found in movements 1, 2 and 6. The first Dumka, *Lento maestoso* – *Allegro vivace*, has one main theme which starts in a typical melancholy mood but brightens, with ornamentation and cheerful humour, to a faster central section. In the second, *Poco adagio* – *Vivace non troppo*, a typically slow 'poco adagio' theme is heard in contrast to a wonderfully joyous, energetic folk melody in the violin, while in the sixth, *Lento maestoso*, a Ukranian folk song 'I go out on the Hillcock' can be heard playing in the lower register of the violin. Movements 3 and 4 have a simple slow-fast structure. Dvořák creates a pastoral quality in the main theme of the third Dumka, *Andante*, bringing to life images of his homeland, while the fourth, *Andante moderato* – *Allegretto scherzando*, is reminiscent of Russian

folk song. The fifth Dumka is a lively *Allegro*, continually fast in the style of a scherzo. The Dumky Trio was first heard at a Prague Civic Circle concert on 11 April 1891 with Dvořák at the piano, Ferdinand Lachner on violin and Hanuš Wihan on cello. Dvořák later wrote his famous cello concerto for Wihan and his respect for the cellist is also obvious in this trio. The cello part contains more elements of virtuosity than it otherwise might.

Dvořák was more than just a nationalist composer. In fact his life was filled with creative twists and turns, his music punctuated with variety, flexibility and change. Just 15 years encompass his piano trios. The early trios reflect Dvořák's rediscovery of Czech folk music after emerging from his self-confessed Wagnerian 'mad period'. The grand F minor trio reflects Dvořák's deep search for harmony between his German and Slavic passions, while the Dumky Trio displays a lively, free and beautiful understanding of the Czech spirit.

Helen Ayres



Macquarie Trio Australia

Nicholas Milton (violin), Michael Goldschlager (cello), and Kathryn Selby (piano) are Macquarie Trio Australia, chamber ensemble-in-residence at Macquarie University, Sydney. Over the last 13 years, Macquarie Trio Australia has delighted audiences across the country. In that time, they have established themselves as an Australian chamber music icon and a national treasure. Their meticulous precision and expressive strength has brought national and international critical acclaim.

Macquarie Trio Australia presents extraordinary concerts in a warm, relaxed atmosphere, attracting an extremely dedicated and diverse audience throughout Australia. The ensemble currently offers subscription series in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Canberra. Macquarie Trio Australia appears regularly at festivals such as the Australian Festival of Chamber Music, the Adelaide Festival of the Arts, the Sydney Festival, and the Brisbane Festival, and has toured extensively for Musica Viva, nationally and internationally.

Through ABC Classics, Macquarie Trio Australia has released several CDs including works of Beethoven, and the complete piano trios of Mendelssohn, Schubert and Brahms. The Beethoven and the Schubert recordings were nominated as finalists for Australian Record

Industry Association (ARIA) Awards for Best Classical Release. Macquarie Trio Australia also reaches an enormous audience through national radio broadcasts of its performances on ABC Classic FM and the MBS FM network of stations.

Kathryn Selby

Born in Sydney, Kathryn Selby studied at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and in the United States at the Curtis Institute of Music and Bryn Mawr College in Philadelphia, and the Mannes School of Music and The Juilliard School in New York. She has performed widely internationally as soloist and chamber musician, including engagements with the Tokyo, Endellion and Sydney String Quartets, the Philadelphia, Boston Pops, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, Saint Louis, San Francisco, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth Symphony Orchestras and the Australian Chamber Orchestra. She has performed at the Athens, Spoleto, Caramoor, Aspen, Marlboro and Sydney Festivals.

In 1989, Kathryn Selby founded the concert series 'Selby & Friends', which ran for four years, taught chamber music at the Sydney Conservatorium, was Musician-in-Residence at Macquarie University and recorded an all-Gershwin disc for Naxos. For ABC Classics she recorded a piano recital, which was recently re-released and a chamber music disc with the Canberra Wind Soloists. In 1993 she was the founding member of Macquarie Trio Australia.

Since returning to Australia in 1988, Kathryn Selby has continued to develop her skills not only as a performing musician but also as an arts entrepreneur. Macquarie University appointed her director of the Trio's activities from its inception in 1993. In 2003 she joined the team of 2MBS-FM Radio in Sydney as an interviewer and presenter.

Nicholas Milton

Nicholas Milton commenced violin studies at the age of six with Gillian Bailey and Robert Pikler. He attended the Conservatorium High School and graduated from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music with the Performance Diploma as a student of Harry Curby. Milton subsequently attended Michigan State University, Boston University and The Juilliard School in New York, where he studied with the legendary Dorothy DeLay. He was Artist-in-Residence at the City University of New York for several years, gave his New York debut at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and performed with many of New York's finest chamber ensembles and orchestras. Milton holds Master's degrees in Violin, Orchestral Conducting, Music Theory, and Philosophy, and a Doctoral degree in Music from the City University of New York.

Nicholas Milton has earned a reputation as one of the leading Australian conductors of his generation. His conducting engagements include appearances with all of the major Australian orchestras, as well as engagements in Germany,

France, Austria, Finland, Italy, Slovenia, Poland, New Zealand and North America. Significant appointments include the following positions: General Music Director, Jena Philharmonic Orchestra, Germany (2004-2007); Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, Dubrovnik Symphony Orchestra, Croatia (2000-2004); Chief Conductor, Willoughby Symphony Orchestra, Sydney (2001-2006); Associate Conductor, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra (2001-2002); Permanent Guest Conductor, Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra (2000-2001); Concertmaster, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra (1996-2002).

In 2003, Dr. Nicholas Milton was awarded the Australian Centenary Medal, for Service to Australian Society and the Advancement of Music. Milton joined Macquarie Trio Australia in 1998.

Michael Goldschlager

Michael Goldschlager began his career in New York City, where he played with some of its greatest ensembles, including the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, New York City Opera, New York City Ballet, and the Orchestra of St Luke's, of which he was principal cellist. For two years, he performed on stage as a musician and actor in the Broadway production of *The Elephant Man* with David Bowie, performing music from the cello suites of J.S. Bach. His principal teachers were Bernard Greenhouse (Beaux Arts Trio), David Soyer (Guarneri String Quartet) and Timothy Eddy, cellist of the Orion

String Quartet. He also studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

After his arrival in Australia in 1985, Michael Goldschlager was, for six years, principal cellist of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra. He has been a guest principal with the Sydney Symphony and Australian Chamber Orchestras, and is heard regularly throughout Australia as a chamber musician, soloist and recitalist. He has been associated with the Australian National Academy of Music since its inception, both as a mentor and as a teacher.

Executive Producers Robert Patterson, Lyle Chan
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