

# Mendelssohn

Piano Trios Nos 1 and 2

Classics



Borodin Trio

CHAN 10535 X



Felix Mendelssohn

© Lebrecht Music & Arts Photo Library

### Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

#### Piano Trio No. 1, Op. 49 31:31

in D minor • in d-Moll • en ré mineur

- |   |                                       |       |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | I Molto allegro ed agitato            | 10:19 |
| 2 | II Andante con moto tranquillo        | 7:23  |
| 3 | III Scherzo. Leggiero e vivace        | 3:58  |
| 4 | IV Finale. Allegro assai appassionato | 9:37  |

#### Piano Trio No. 2, Op. 66 32:57

in C minor • in c-Moll • en ut mineur

- |   |   |       |
|---|---|-------|
| 5 | I Allegro energico e con fuoco          | 11:56 |
| 6 | II Andante espressivo                   | 8:06  |
| 7 | III Scherzo. Molto allegro quasi presto | 3:44  |
| 8 | IV Finale. Allegro appassionato         | 8:57  |

**TT 64:38**

#### Borodin Trio

Rostislav Dubinsky violin

Yuli Turovsky cello

Luba Edlina piano

## Mendelssohn: Piano Trios

---

It has been suggested that the reason so many composers wrote so few trios is that three is a crowd and difficult to maintain in true harmony. Yet it remains a fact that some of the greatest musical experiences come from trios, such as Beethoven's *Archduke*, Dvorák's *Dumky* and Brahms' great Horn Trio. Haydn's vast output of quality music includes 125 baryton trios and thirty-one piano trios, while Mozart left only seven piano trios, one more than Beethoven. It is perhaps significant that writing for three instruments invariably brings out the best in a composer, and equally so that Mendelssohn's two piano trios belong to the last years of his short yet highly productive life. A life which, seen in retrospect, covered an enormous musical spectrum and finally burnt out in an excess of energy.

Haydn died less than four months after Mendelssohn was born, and the following year saw the births of both Chopin and Schumann, with Liszt only a year later. When Mendelssohn was born, Beethoven had eighteen more productive years to live, Berlioz was a boy of six, Rossini was flexing

his creative muscles at seventeen, Schubert was twelve, and only four years later both Verdi and Wagner were to arrive in the world. Mendelssohn, uniquely among his contemporaries, was born into a wealthy, cultured Berlin household, where artists were constant visitors and the youngsters of the family were encouraged to develop their own creative instincts. Small wonder that young Felix became a master musical craftsman before reaching his teens. Much of the credit for this belongs to the Sunday musical gatherings in the Mendelssohn home, when first rate amateur as well as visiting professional players would get together to perform music, including the works of the boy of the house. No budding composer could have asked for a better training ground in which to develop his gifts.

Much of that early music survived, and some of it was even approved by the composer for publication in later years, but an early trio of that time appears to have been destroyed, suggesting that the premise already propounded applied to this juvenile chamber work. Incidentally, the boy's first

public appearance was at the age of nine, playing the piano in a trio for keyboard and two horns by Joseph Woelfl, which may have coaxed him to try his own hand at a piano and strings trio. He was not to attempt another piano trio for more than twenty years. Twenty years in which he established a considerable reputation as a highly practical and equally cultured artist, whose friends ranged from Weber and Goethe to Cherubini, Rossini, Paganini, Chopin, Liszt and Schumann, who sent Mendelssohn the newly discovered score of Schubert's *Great* Symphony in 1838. Mendelssohn's musicianship knew no bounds, and he was famous for conducting the first 'modern' performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in 1829, a month after his own twentieth birthday. He was also associated as conductor with the great Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig, while his regular visits to England had brought his own music to the forefront of English programmes, enhanced by his friendship with Queen Victoria.

### **Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 49**

Mendelssohn celebrated his thirtieth birthday on 2 February 1839, and the following month saw the composition of his *Ruy Blas* Overture, although Felix heartily disliked Victor Hugo's play. That year Mendelssohn conducted the

first performance of Schubert's *Great* Symphony with the Gewandhaus Orchestra, justifying Schumann's faith in sending him the score the previous year. He made his fine setting of Psalm CXIV and composed his First Piano Trio. Both new works were premiered during the autumn concert season in Leipzig, and the new Trio was an immediate success.

It opens with a flowing melody, first given to the cello before being passed in friendly fashion to the first violin. The violin explores its possibilities before an equally attractive second theme arrives, upon which the two are developed through a variety of groupings and keys in remarkably happy communion.

While the two themes of the first movement would have been equally at home as songs, the theme of the *Andante* is nearer to a 'song without words'. It is first played by the piano, who remains the dominant partner of the trio. There is a hint of Beethoven's B flat Trio in its shape, but the character is wholly Mendelssohn at his most lyrical.

Gaiety and delicacy flavour the sparkling Scherzo, which prepares us for the buoyant Finale, a rondo with a strongly rhythmic theme and varied episodes. Here Mendelssohn's piano writing suggests that he would enjoy the virtuoso brilliance to end the work in an extrovert flourish.

### Piano Trio No. 2 in C minor, Op. 66

Between 1839 and 1844 Mendelssohn's life was full of incident. He travelled to England on three occasions; to Berlin; back to Leipzig to found the Conservatoire in 1842 and see the twelve-year-old violinist Joseph Joachim enter the institution the next year; he had meetings with Wagner and Berlioz; he completed and performed the incidental music to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the *Scottish Symphony* and the Violin Concerto. Never a strong man, by December 1844 he was forced to rest in Frankfurt.

In September 1845 Mendelssohn rallied again and returned to Leipzig, to conduct the Gewandhaus Orchestra and to teach composition at the Conservatoire, where he was the director in all but name. That year he composed two major chamber works, the String Quintet in B flat major, Op. 87 and his Second Piano Trio. Work on *Elijah*, which had been conceived in 1837, neared completion. The first movement of the C minor Trio has greater intensity than in the D minor, the two themes being more contrasted: the second, with its greater breadth, makes a particularly strong first entry, and a delightful hinted appearance in the coda.

If Beethoven's Op. 97 Trio is felt in the *Andante* of the D minor Trio, we can feel the *Archduke* in the piano writing of the second movement of the C minor, but Mendelssohn's music is essentially elegiac and his string writing warmly melodic.

Gossamer-like textures and a transparent fairy quality inhabit the Scherzo, recalling the music of the Octet and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, while the final *Allegro appassionato* is conceived on a grand scale, with a strong first subject and a chorale-like tune which appears in the first episode and returns in grandiloquent fashion in the closing pages. Mendelssohn's optimism is felt in every bar, but he again overworked and this time his body had had enough. Within two short years he had died.

© Denby Richards

The **Borodin Trio** was formed after its members emigrated from the Soviet Union in 1976, since when they have played in all the major cities of Europe and America, as well as making a tour of Australia. Rostislav Dubinsky founded the legendary Borodin Quartet and served as its first violinist for thirty years. His wife, Luba Edlina, is best known for her brilliant performances and recordings

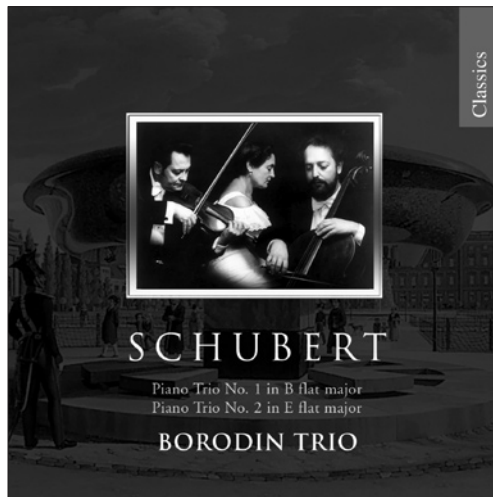
as a pianist with the Borodin Quartet. The cellist Yuli Turovsky gave many acclaimed performances as soloist with the Moscow

Chamber Orchestra before emigrating to Montreal. He is the founding Music Director and conductor of I Musici de Montréal.



Borodin Trio: Luba Edlina, Yuli Turovsky and Rostislav Dubinsky

Also available



CHAN 10033(2) X

Schubert  
Piano Trios Nos 1 & 2

8

Also available

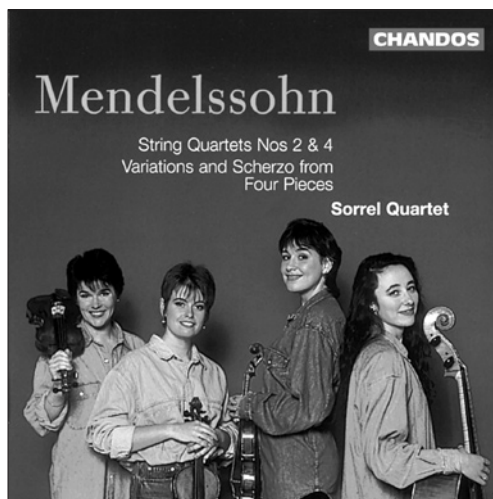


CHAN 10184 X

Arensky  
Piano Trios Nos 1 & 2

9

Also available



CHAN 9555

Mendelssohn  
String Quartets Nos 2 & 4 • Variations and Scherzo from Four Pieces



You can now purchase Chandos CDs online at our website: [www.chandos.net](http://www.chandos.net)  
To order CDs by mail or telephone please contact Liz: 0845 370 4994

For requests to license tracks from this CD or any other Chandos discs please find application forms on the Chandos website or contact the Finance Director, Chandos Records Ltd, direct at the address below or via e-mail at [srevill@chandos.net](mailto:srevill@chandos.net).

Chandos Records Ltd, Chandos House, 1 Commerce Park, Commerce Way, Colchester,  
Essex CO2 8HX, UK. E-mail: [enquiries@chandos.net](mailto:enquiries@chandos.net)  
Telephone: + 44 (0)1206 225 200 Fax: + 44 (0)1206 225 201

**Recording producer** Brian Couzens

**Sound engineer** Ralph Couzens

**Assistant engineer** Bill Todd

**Recording venue** St Barnabas Church, Finchley, London: November 1984

**Front cover** In love – Photograph by Meliha Gojak/[www.sxc.hu](http://www.sxc.hu)

**Design and typesetting** Cassidy Rayne Creative

© 1985 Chandos Records Ltd

Digital remastering © 2009 Chandos Records Ltd

© 2009 Chandos Records Ltd

Chandos Records Ltd, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HX, England

Printed in the EU

CHANDOS Classics

CHAN 10535 X

## Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

Piano Trio No. 1, Op. 49 31:31  
in D minor • in d-Moll • en ré mineur

- 1 I Molto allegro ed agitato 10:19
- 2 II Andante con moto tranquillo 7:23
- 3 III Scherzo. Leggiero e vivace 3:58
- 4 IV Finale. Allegro assai appassionato 9:37

Piano Trio No. 2, Op. 66 32:57  
in C minor • in c-Moll • en ut mineur

- 5 I Allegro energico e con fuoco 11:56
- 6 II Andante espressivo 8:06
- 7 III Scherzo. Molto allegro quasi presto 3:44
- 8 IV Finale. Allegro appassionato 8:57

TT 64:38

### Borodin Trio

Rostislav Dubinsky violin  
Yuli Turovsky cello  
Luba Edlina piano

© 1985 Chandos Records Ltd

Digital remastering © 2009 Chandos Records Ltd

© 2009 Chandos Records Ltd

Chandos Records Ltd • Colchester • Essex • England

MENDELSSOHN: PIANO TRIOS NOS 1 & 2 - Borodin Trio

CHANDOS  
CHAN 10535 X

MENDELSSOHN: PIANO TRIOS NOS 1 & 2 - Borodin Trio

CHANDOS  
CHAN 10535 X