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Chandos
DIGITAL

DVORÁK
Piano Trio No 3
in F minor, Op. 65
The Borodin Trio



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- I – Allegro ma non troppo (15:30)
II – Scherzo: Allegretto grazioso (7:00)
III – Poco adagio (10:14)
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Antonin Dvořák was a generous composer for, apart from the “single” concerti (one each for violin and piano), he wrote more than one work in almost all the accepted musical forms. He was particularly generous when writing chamber music, enriching the repertoire of the string quartet (fourteen numbered works and other pieces, with descriptive titles, including the seductive *Cypresses*), piano quartet (two), string quartet (two, one with double bass), piano quintet (the sparkling work in A major, opus 81), and the piano trio (six compositions in all; the first two, jointly designated opus 13, are lost).

The two opus 13 Piano Trios were the first compositions in which Dvořák combined piano and strings in a chamber work, but they were by no means his first chamber compositions. Before their

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Merit for 25 years of service, the quartet had given some 3,000 concerts around the world up until the time of Dubinsky's emigration. During this period he became a celebrated chamber music coach, preparing a number of prize-winning ensembles for international competitions. He met his wife Luba Edlina at the Moscow Conservatory when they were both students. She is best known for her many brilliant performances and recordings as pianist with the Borodin Quartet, and was associated with them for 20 years. The Dubinskys now live in the USA, where they both teach at one of America's most prestigious schools of music, that of Indiana University: Mr Dubinsky as Director of Chamber Music, and Mme Edlina in the piano faculty. Cellist Yuli Turovsky also studied at the Moscow Conservatory; he was a prize-winner of the Third Soviet Cello Competition and a laureate at the 22nd International Prague Spring Competition in 1970. His many performances as soloist with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra won him acclaim before he emigrated in 1976 to Montreal, where he now teaches at the Conservatoire de Musique. He is founding music director and conductor of Canada's new chamber orchestra, I Musici di Montreal.

Recordings for Chandos by the Borodin Trio include the Piano Trios of Brahms, Rachmaninov, Schubert and Tchaikovsky, and the Piano Trio and Piano Quintet of Shostakovich. In addition, Dubinsky and Edlina (as the Dubinsky Duo) have recorded Violin and Piano Sonatas of Shostakovich and Schnittke; Yuli Turovsky has recorded the Cello and Piano Sonatas of Prokofiev and Shostakovich with Luba Edlina, and Kodaly's Cello Sonata and Duo with his wife Eleonora.

Recording producer: Brian Couzens / Sound engineer: Ralph Couzens / Assisting engineer: Bill Todd / Recorded in the Church of St George the Martyr, Bloomsbury, London in June 1983 / Front cover: colour etching, Wodzinowski 'Polnische Bauernhochzeit', courtesy of Archiv für Kunst und Geschichte, West Berlin / Sleeve design: Thumb Design Partnership

composition, in 1871, Dvořák had already written four string quartets (the first of them, opus 2, was revised in 1887) and the *Cypresses*, a Clarinet Quintet and a Cello Sonata (both scores are lost). The only known performance of either of the early trios was when the *Adagio* of the 1st Trio was given on 5 July 1872 under the auspices of Dr Ludevít Procházka, and the press reviews were favourable. But, despite the reception of the *Adagio*, Dvořák did not return to the Piano Trio until 1875, when he composed the work now known as Number One (Opus 21) and almost immediately began the Second (Opus 26), which he composed in sixteen days in the following January (1876).

A few months before the composition of the Second Trio Dvořák's daughter, Josefa, died. This tragedy is reflected in much of the music of 1876. In 1882 Dvořák experienced much national and international success (he was made an honorary member of the Umělecká Beseda Artists' Association in Prague), but in December of that year his mother died. The following month he wrote the touching piano Impromptu in D minor and started work on his 3rd Piano Trio in F minor. The composition of the work was difficult, and he was kept busy with the Trio for almost three months as opposed to the usual two or three weeks he normally needed for the creation of a chamber work. This unprecedented amount of time, plus his rewriting, is reflected in the complex nature of the music.

Antonín Dvořák was a generous melodist, and regardless of his mood he could never deny his natural lyrical gift. Naturally the melodies vary in their colouring in relation to their context, and the Trio in F minor is suffused with frustration and impotence – as could only be expected considering Dvořák's circumstances prior to the commencement of composition. There are four movements laid out on a grand scale, but despite the almost 45 minutes duration of the music

there is no hint of it ever outstaying its welcome as Dvořák's personal grief takes shape in tangible form.

A stark octave passage for the strings opens the first movement, and it is left to the piano to give harmonic flesh to this skeleton. The phrase is pregnant with ideas, particularly a rising, dotted turn and four semiquavers (which can, almost at will, turn into triplets). The second subject is a long *espressivo* melody for the 'cello. After the violin has sung this tune the music becomes turbulent, but the development begins hesitantly and grows in intensity. The recapitulation storms in with the octave idea counterpointed with triple octaves from the piano, and there is little respite until the reappearance of the second subject in a clear F major. The tension then builds until a stretto brings the movement to a decidedly brutal conclusion in the minor.

The *scherzo* is obstinate in its insistence on a rigid two-in-a-bar pulse. The tonality is C sharp minor, and, being a semi-tone higher than expected, the quirkiness of the music is heightened. The trio is smoother and is in the warmer key of D flat major, but its brief hint of warmth is dispelled by the return of the *scherzo*.

The slow movement is the emotional core of the Trio. Here is music of a passionate intensity and deep devotion. After the stringency of much of the previous two movements, here at last is true warmth and peace. Over a rich chordal accompaniment the 'cello sings a theme, *espressivo*, in its most potent register. The violin soon joins in, and the ensuing conversation is thoughtful and lyrical, growing towards the middle section which erupts in a blaze of B major. Following a short imitative passage the music subsides into a dreamy dialogue for the strings over a rippling piano accompaniment which gradually returns to the mood of the opening; but the music is greatly varied, and there is very little literal repetition. Peace once again prevails in the final pages,

and the music comes to rest on a gentle chord of A flat major.

With the finale we return to the passionate impetuosity of the first movement. The music alludes to the earthy Czech dance, the *furiant*, and the music plunges headlong into F minor with a striking theme played by all three instruments. The momentum continues unabated for over 100 bars before a restful plateau, in C sharp minor, is reached. The dance will not rest, however, and it soon takes hold again and a furious development ensues. Ultimately the restful music reappears, this time in the home key of F minor, but the dance takes over once again. The coda juxtaposes slow and fast music, and the end is an affirmative statement in F major which brings the Trio to a dazzling conclusion. Despite the fact that Dvořák's mother died shortly before he began work on the 3rd Piano Trio perhaps we might see, in this ending, that life has triumphed over death.

At its first performance at a concert at Mladá Boleslav on 27 October 1883 the violin was played by Ferdinand Lachner, the 'cello by Alois Neruda, and Dvořák himself played the piano.

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The Borodin Trio was formed after the three members emigrated from the Soviet Union in 1976. Since that date they have established themselves as one of the best piano trios of our generation, having played in all the major cities of Europe and America, as well as making a tour of Australasia. Their British debut at the Wigmore Hall in July 1978 was "an outstanding success in anyone's book" (*Daily Telegraph*), and other appearances have included the Bath, Malvern and Boston Festivals.

Rostislav Dubinsky was founder and first violinist of the legendary Borodin Quartet for thirty years. Decorated as Musical Artists of Great

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THE BORODIN TRIO
Luba Edlina piano
Rostislav Dubinsky violin
Yuli Turovsky cello

DDD

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