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Photo: Alissa Margulies

THE BORODIN TRIO – a renowned ensemble whose violinist is Rostislav Dubinsky who was for thirty years first violinist of the celebrated Borodin String Quartet. The Trio was formed after the three musicians – Dubinsky with Luba Edlina (piano) and Yuli Turovsky (cello) – left Russia in 1976.

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Chandos

DIGITAL

BORODIN TRIO

SCHUBERT

PIANO TRIO IN E FLAT Op. 100



THE COMPACT DISC DIGITAL AUDIO SYSTEM

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Recording Producer: Brian Couzens. Sound Engineer: Ralph Couzens.
Recorded at the Church of St. George the Martyr, Bloomsbury, London on June 11 & 12, 1981.
Front Cover Photo: David Usill. Sleeve Design: Mantis Studio, London.

It is said that Stravinsky, when once asked if he were not put to sleep by the prolixities of Schubert, replied, 'What does it matter, if, when I awake, it seems to me that I am in paradise?'

This single exchange seems to encompass very nearly all that has been, or ever can be, said about the youthful Viennese who wrote some of the world's most beautiful music. Still, in not quite 32 years, how did Schubert have enough time to write so many long pieces? How could the last three years, filled with often terrible suffering and the certainty of death, have produced the C major String Quintet and Symphony, the last three piano sonatas, and the two piano trios, all numbered amongst his greatest - and lengthiest - works? Why, indeed, do literal restatements, such as the inclusion of two nearly-complete transpositions of a long, dreamlike sequence in the first-movement Development of this Trio, abound in his works? The answer, of course, lies in the nature of Schubert's genius. Living in the direct shadow of Beethoven, he quite naturally wrote in large forms; yet he instinctively abandoned himself within them to those sublime melodies which sing, or breathe, or lightly tread their way along, in whatever maddening contradiction to the necessities of structure.

The fundamental dichotomy is fascinating, for there is much to admire in Schubert's manipulation of musical material. Opus 100 begins with a commonplace, unison fanfare of four bars; one scarcely notices the slight alteration of its conclusion in the quiet little rejoinder introduced by the strings in the following measure. Yet in the 'cello solo at bar 17 there appears a figure which is merely a decoration and extension of that dialogue motif:



Material is now provided for most of the Exposition, including the singing triplets of the closing section and a serenely poignant theme which, in one of the composer's many detours, appears as an extended afterthought. The Development introduces the leisurely repeated passages, based on the 'afterthought' theme, which were mentioned earlier. Eventually this same figure, by a series of subtle miracles, is transformed to a recollection of the opening statement, and we are inconspicuously drawn to the Recapitulation. As if in recompense, the actual 'second theme', a floating, repeated-note melody of perpetually shifting tonality, appears a third time near the end, and the emanation of its introductory rhythm is heard in the final three bars.

The *Andante con moto*, in the related key of C minor, begins with two bars of a sombre, inexorable chordal rhythm in the piano, introducing a 'cello solo' which Maurice J. E. Brown has called a 'threnodic march' – surely one of the most heartbreakingly beautiful of all Schubertian utterances. The wide melodic leap which is a crucial part of both its organic construction and its expressive power is transformed not long afterward in the E flat second theme, a rocking, soothing suggestion of heavenly bliss. In addition to the truncated Development often employed for slow movements, one is surprised to hear two more 'working-out' passages in the Recapitulation. In the first, which wanders through several remote keys, we no longer sense a pulsating grief, but a passionate, tormented abandon. Even more shattering, then, in the Coda's brief restatement of the opening theme, is the little slide, for one breathtaking moment, into major, then an immediate and hopeless closing-in of the original minor before a lengthy, chorale-like concluding phrase comes to terms with the inevitable.

The Scherzo, marked *Allegro moderato*, is the only movement which could be viewed overall as charming, light-hearted and truly concise. No shadows seem to cloud the rich invention of the whole. Yet, what surprises! Both Scherzo and Trio have second sections

which move to remote areas both tonally and imaginatively: the Scherzo, from Haydnesque canonic writing to an E major Ländler; the Trio, from a remarkable suggestion of stamping feet and castanets in the first section (in A flat), through a breathtaking transition to a hushed, but still vibrant dance in B flat minor, and back again.

The early Schubert biographer, Heinrich Kreissle, spoke of the 'poor subject' of the Finale, which seemed to be worn threadbare by exceeding length. In fact, the simplicity of the main theme is very welcome: but the movement's discursive variant of sonata form makes it not only overlong but virtually impossible to follow without exhaustive study. Still, if a redeeming feature were needed, it is not long in coming: in an inspired move, the 'threnodic march' of the slow movement is recalled, first in what served as the Development, and yet again in the tonic minor just before a triumphal closing section in the major. The ending may be a bit obvious; it is no matter. What remains embedded in our ears after each hearing is that sublime *andante* theme, one of the earlier uses of a romantic 'cyclic' form employed in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and in countless works by Liszt, Franck and others later in the century.

On New Year's Day, 1828, Schubert read to a gathering of his friends a poem containing the following lines:

No longer will songs in our party be ringing
For the singer too will be called away.

The waters from source to the sea must throng

The singer at last will be lost in his song.

In this great Trio, Schubert can be seen to have infused the Romantic's sense of the beyond with an admixture of his own supreme lyricism and the certainty and imminence of his passing. He was to create his own heaven, for all of us, in his music.

Jean Wentworth

LUBA EDLINA is especially noted for her brilliant performances and recordings with the original Borodin String Quartet. When she was studying at the Moscow Conservatory she met fellow-student Rostislav Dubinsky, and they were later married. During her 20-year association with the Quartet, she was permitted to appear with them in the West only once, when they gave a rapturously acclaimed concert in the Palace of Versailles.

ROSTISLAV DUBINSKY, after completing his studies with Abraham Yampolsky at the Moscow Conservatory in 1944, became first violinist of the newly-formed Moscow Conservatory Quartet, later known as the Borodin String Quartet. The ensemble received the Russian decoration for 25 years of service as 'Musical Artists of Great Merit' in 1968 and by 1976, when he left the Soviet Union, the Borodin Quartet had given some 3000 concerts around the world. During this period he became a celebrated chamber music coach, preparing a number of prize-winning groups for international competitions and he has continued working with chamber ensembles at several leading conservatories in Holland, where he and his wife now live.

YULI TUROVSKY, who studied with Galina Kazolupova at the Moscow Conservatory, was a cello soloist with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra under Rudolf Barshai, appearing with them on international tours until his emigration from the Soviet Union in 1976. While still in Russia, he made a number of recordings both as a soloist and in chamber groups with such musicians as violinist Vladimir Spivakov - with whom he appeared in 1979 at the *Mostly Mozart Festival* in the Lincoln Center in New York.

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SCHUBERT: PIANO TRIO No. 2 - Borodin Trio

Chandos

CHAN 8324

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

TRIO IN E^b FOR VIOLIN, CELLO AND PIANO
Op. 100, D.929 (1827)

I - Allegro

II - Andante con moto

III - Scherzo: Allegro moderato

IV - Allegro moderato



BORODIN TRIO

LUBA EDLINA - Piano
ROSTISLAV DUBINSKY - Violin
YULI TUROVSKY - Cello

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