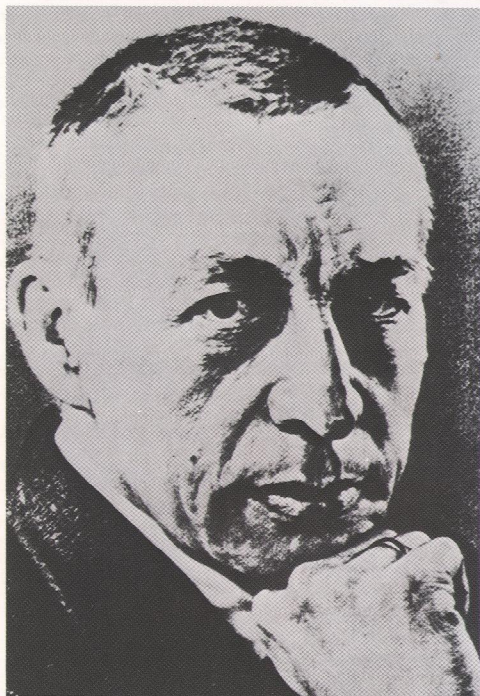


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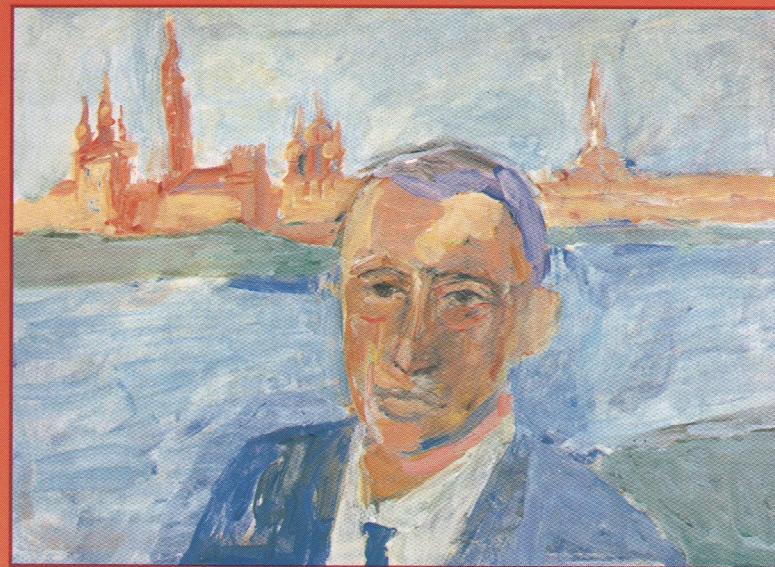
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**Chandos**

**DIGITAL**

# RACHMANINOV

THE "ELEGIAC" PIANO TRIOS  
No. 1 in G Minor Op. posth. No. 2 in D minor Op. 9  
THE BORODIN TRIO





One of Rachmaninov's first pieces of original work was a piano duet transcription of Tchaikovsky's *Manfred* Symphony, the first performance of which he had attended in Moscow in March 1886, just before his 13th birthday. He was already a student at the Moscow Conservatory and was shortly to begin his second year there in Anton Arensky's harmony class. That summer Jurgenson published the symphony and Rachmaninov began his transcription, partly as an exercise. It was completed by the winter and so impressed Rachmaninov's piano teacher, Nikolai Zverev, that the young Rachmaninov, together with a fellow student, was taken to play the transcription to Tchaikovsky. This piece has long been lost, but Tchaikovsky was sufficiently impressed to arrange for Jurgenson to commission a piano-duet version of *The Sleeping Beauty* music in the summer of 1891, the 17 year old Rachmaninov's first commission. Rachmaninov was already working very hard, because he had been allowed to take his final piano examinations a year early which was an enormous drain on his energy, although he graduated with honours thanks to his prodigious technique.

Instead of taking a holiday Rachmaninov composed the First Piano Concerto, and *The Sleeping Beauty* duet was not as satisfactory as Tchaikovsky had hoped, perhaps because by now Rachmaninov was finding his own voice as a composer; however, Alexander Siloti helped to correct the score and mollified the older composer.

By now Rachmaninov has arranged to take his finals in theory and composition a year early which entailed writing a symphony, some vocal works and an opera! He wrote a single-movement symphony and was then caught up in the fever of writing music to the extent that he composed his first *Trio Elégiaque* between 18 and 21 January 1892. This was also a one-movement work, and its first performance was given nine days later by the composer with the violinist David Krein and the cellist Anatole Brandukov in the Vostryakov Hall. At the same concert Brandukov and Rachmaninov played the *Two Pieces* Opus 2 for cello and piano, which were dedicated to the cellist.

The First *Elegiac Trio* is a short, thoughtful work, atmospheric and already showing the personality of its young composer. On 25 October 1893 Tchaikovsky died and Rachmaninov was deeply affected. Two years earlier Tchaikovsky had himself been similarly moved by the death of Nikolai and had composed a Piano Trio in A minor in his friend's memory: now Rachmaninov decided to write a second *Elegiac Trio* in memory of Tchaikovsky. This took him six weeks, from 25 October to 15 December, confessing to

Natalya Skalon two days later in a letter that he had "trembled for every phrase, sometimes crossed out absolutely everything and began to think and think about it all over again."

He must have begun the Trio immediately after hearing the news of Tchaikovsky's death for the opening bars are laden with grief and the first movement contains passages of deeply tragic passion. The second movement is a set of eight variations on the main theme of Rachmaninov's orchestral fantasy *The Rock*, which Tchaikovsky had been so impressed with that he was going to give the work's premiere in St Petersburg the following January – with Tchaikovsky dead the first performance was given in March in Moscow. Although the variations are not of the quality which Rachmaninov found in his maturity they are very interesting and contain some fine writing for the piano, which has a thoughtful, cadenza-like second variation followed by a brighter third. The penultimate variation gives a hint of the motif which pervades the First Symphony, which was completed in 1895. The short third movement recalls the first and sums up the young composer's intentions in music of high intensity and feeling.

The first performance was given by Rachmaninov with the violinist Yuly Konyus and, again, Anatole Brandukov on 31 January 1894, bearing the inscription "à la mémoire d'un grand artiste". A few years later, for another performance, Rachmaninov revised the work, making a few cuts and replacing a routine Sixth Variation for piano with a more imaginative one using the full trio. This version was played for the first time on 12 February 1907, without Rachmaninov, the players being the pianist Alexander Goldenveyzer, the violinist Karl Grigorovitch and the ubiquitous Brandukov, on which occasion the Trio took up the second half since Rachmaninov asserted that "after the Trio there must be nothing else, because it is so long and grave."

A third version, in which Rachmaninov included a few minor revisions he had made in 1917, was edited by Alexander Goldenveyzer and published by the Soviet State Publishing House in 1950, and it is this edition which is used for this recording.

Denby Richards

**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 "and 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 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 U.S.A. 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 prize-winner of the 3rd 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 de Montreal.

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



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Recording Producer: Brian Couzens. Sound Engineer: Ralph Couzens.

Recorded in the Church of St. George the Martyr. Bloomsbury, London in June 1983.

Front Cover Painting by Eleonora Turovsky. Sleeve Design: Mantis Studio/London.

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CHAN 8341

RACHMANINOV  
THE "ELEGIAC" PIANO TRIOS  
THE BORODIN TRIO



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ROSTISLAV DUBINSKY violin

LUBA EDLINA piano YULI TUROVSKY cello

PIANO TRIO NO. 1 IN G MINOR Op. posth.

1 Lento lugubre 15:18

PIANO TRIO NO. 2 IN D MINOR Op. 9

2 I - Moderato-allegro moderato 18:41

3 II - Quasi variazione 17:40

4 III - Allegro risoluto 7:25

DDD

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