



**PROGRAMME
NOTES
28th April 2018**

**Trio Shaham
Hagai Shaham (violin), Arnon Erez (piano)
Raphael Wallfisch (cello)**

**Edvard Hagerup Grieg (1843-1907)
Andante con moto (1878)**

Grieg wrote this Trio in his composing log hut in the remote picturesque Norwegian hillside, but never got beyond its slow movement, an Andante con moto, the manuscript of which is dated 17 June, 1878. After Grieg's death, a composer friend, Julius Röntgen, found this movement while combing through his sketches, and expressed his admiration for it to Grieg's widow: "What a solemnity it conveys! How he can't get enough of that single theme, which even in the major mode retains its mourning character, and then develops so beautifully its full power. ... The piece can very well stand by itself and does not at all give the impression of being a fragment, as it constitutes a perfect entity in itself." It was eventually published in 1978.

The Andante con moto has a doleful and melancholy tone for a piece created in such picturesque surroundings. Cast in a sonata form, it seems downright tragic in the first part of its exposition section, its dark thoughts evoking Russian music. In Russia, piano trios would sometimes be composed as memorial tributes. Grieg's piano trio movement foreshadows a funerary sound world that compares to sections of the soon-to-be-written trios of Tchaikovsky (1881-82) and Rachmaninoff (1892-1893). Still, it is not unremittingly gloomy. The second theme is a transformation of the first, transposed from C minor to E flat major; but here, Grieg provides an enriched harmony that makes it his own, and he indicates that the music should now be played "cantante, leggiero (singing, lightly)", inviting less weight than the "espressivo (expressive)" of the beginning. The development section goes through harmonic excursions, and the recapitulation arrives with a dramatic announcement of the theme by the piano playing in double-octaves.

Antonín Leopold Dvořák (1841-1904)

Piano Trio Op. 90 (Dumky) (1891)

1. Lento maestoso- Allegro quasi doppio movimento (E minor- E major)
2. Poco adagio -Vivace non troppo-Vivace (C sharp minor)
3. Andante-Vivace non troppo-Allegretto (A major-A minor-A major)
4. Andante moderato-Allegretto scherzando-Quasi tempo di marcia (D minor- D major)
5. Allegro (E flat major- E flat minor)
6. Lento maestoso (C minor- C major)

The Piano Trio No. 4 in E minor, Op. 90, B. 166 (called “Dumky Trio”) is one the composer's best-known works. It is a prominent example for a piece of chamber music deviating from the customary form of classical chamber music in terms of the number of movements and of their formal construction.

Dumky (plural of *dumka*) is the diminutive form of the term *duma* (plural *dumy*), which refers to epic ballads, specifically a song or lament of captive people. During the 19th century, composers from other Slavic countries began using the *duma* as a classical form used to indicate a brooding, introspective composition with cheerful sections interspersed within. Dvořák used the *dumka* form in several other compositions.

It was completed on 12 February 1891, and was premiered in Prague on 11 April 1891, with violinist Ferdinand Lachner, cellist Hanuš Wihan, and Dvořák himself on piano. The same evening, Prague's Charles University awarded the composer an honorary doctorate. The work was so well received that Dvořák performed it on his 40-concert farewell tour throughout Moravia and Bohemia, just before he left for the United States to head the National Conservatory of Music of America in New York.

It features six *dumky* episodes: the first three are connected together without interruption in the harmonically complementary keys given above, in effect forming a long first movement. The final three *dumky* are presented in unrelated keys, thus giving the overall impression of a four-movement structure.

According to music critic Daniel Felsenfeld, “The form of the piece is structurally simple but emotionally complicated, being an *uninhibited Bohemian lament*. Considered essentially formless, at least by classical standards, it is more like a six movement *dark fantasia*—completely original and successful, a benchmark piece for the composer. Being completely free of the rigors of sonata form gave Dvořák license to take the movements to some dizzying, heavy, places, able to be *both brooding* and yet somehow, through it all, *a little lighthearted*.”

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Piano Trio in B flat D. 898 (1827)

1. Allegro moderato 2. Andante un poco mosso 3. Scherzo. Allegro 4. Rondo. Allegro vivace

Schubert wrote this Trio No. 1 in B flat major D. 898 in 1827, but finished it in 1828, the last year of his life. It was published in 1836 as Opus 99. It is the first of two magnificent works in the genre with which Schubert filled the void in piano trio composition that had existed since Beethoven's "Archduke" Trio of 1811. It is an unusually large scale work for piano trio, taking about 40 minutes to perform.

The first movement (4/4, B flat) is in sonata form with two main themes, the first being characterized by dotted rhythms and irregular phrase lengths, while the second having lyrical melodies and regular phrases. The development section expands on both themes, going into remote keys and often becoming turbulent. In the last section of the development, fragmented versions of the main theme are presented in a succession of keys. This movement is happy and carefree; its bubbly opening theme is at first property of the strings but is soon turned over to the piano, which emulates the violin/cello octaves while the strings take over the bouncing accompaniment. A heart-warming second melody in the cello assumes an almost heroic posture when it recurs.

The second movement (6/8, E flat) is in the style of a gondola song with a lilting melody and swaying rhythm with a contrasting section which is more turbulent. Pretty soon, however, calm is restored. The melody of this movement is like a reflection of the famous Adagio Cantabile of Beethoven's Pathetique Sonata. The resemblance is probably not accidental, but the direction in which Schubert heads with this little gem of a melody is entirely his own. The movement falls into an ABA form, with the central C minor/major portion offering some snappy rhythms and a decorated melody that are in sharp contrast to the simple opening and closing music.

The third movement (3/4, B flat) is in the classical minuet form. The scherzo proper features heavy counterpoint, with the three instruments constantly imitating each other. The trio section is a relaxed waltz. The Scherzo returns us to the good-natured B flat major of the first movement; its trio section recaptures something of the previous Andante's melodic composure.

The principal theme of the last movement (2/4, B flat) resembles that of one of Schubert's songs, "Skolie". A two-bar rhythm is prevalent, giving the marked impression of *alla breve* time rather than 2/4. The sections in 2/4 are interrupted three times by passages in 3/2 time, in the style of a polonaise. These give further credence to the theory that the minim is in fact the basic time unit in this movement. The music ends with the tempo raised to *presto*.

Musicians

Formed in 2009, this Trio comprises three of today's finest international instrumentalists. They have performed widely throughout Europe and Israel to much critical acclaim. Their concert at Wigmore Hall on 20 January, 2016, was praised for bringing "...a spontaneity and freshness to the music with the inventive nature of the material really shining through". (Seen & Heard International) Fonoforum writes that the performers were "... utterly moving, as a result of a truly great modesty which cannot be replaced by simplicity or unpretentiousness; a modesty without any sentimentality. The musicians know, with minute precision, how to guard the boundary between the intimacy of chamber music and the sweeping grandeur of a large-scale concert, only achievable by artists whose capacities and experience are on an equally high level." They have been chosen by the Wigmore Hall to present the complete Beethoven Piano Trios in 2020, Beethoven's 250th anniversary year.

As a soloist Hagai Shaham has performed with the world's leading orchestras, including the English Chamber Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, and Israel Philharmonic. In September 1990, he and his duo partner, Arnon Erez, won the first prize at the ARD International Music operation in Munich in the violin-piano duo category, leading to highly acclaimed duo partnership which continues to this day.

Arnon Erez is one of Israel's leading pianists and chamber musicians, and has won several international competitions, including the first prize at the Francois Shapira competition. He has performed in major festivals and concert halls around the world, including Carnegie Hall, Beethoven Halle, and Wigmore Hall.

Raphael Wallfisch was born in London into a family of distinguished musicians; his mother is the cellist Anita Lasker-Wallfisch and his father, the pianist Peter Wallfisch. At the age of 24 he won the Gaspar Cassado International Cello Competition in Florence, and has since enjoyed a worldwide career. With over 70 discs to his credit he is one of the most recorded classical artists in the world.