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West Cork Chamber Music Festival 2021

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Bantry and Beyond

Festival Echoes

24. 3 Into 5

Filmed at Martinů Hall, Liechtenstein Palace, Prague

Pavel Haas Quartet

Veronika Jarůšková, Marek Zwiebel [violins]

Luosha Fang [viola]

Peter Jarůšek [cello]

Boris Giltburg [piano]

Dvořák

Piano Trio No.3 in F minor Op.65

Piano Quintet No.2 in A major Op.81

Veronika Jarůšková [violin]

Peter Jarůšek [cello]

Boris Giltburg [piano]

Antonin Dvořák [1841-1904]

Piano Trio no 3 in F minor Opus 65 [1883]

1. *Allegro ma non Troppo – Poco piu mosso, quasi vivace*
2. *Allegro grazioso – Meno mosso*
3. *Poco Adagio*
4. *Finale: Allegro con brio – Meno mosso – Vivace*

Dvořák's success as a composer was first established during the 1870s. This success was based on music with strong Czech or Slav roots. His operas all had librettos in Czech and by far his most popular works were Slavonic Dances and Rhapsodies. By the early 1880s his success as a Czech composer had begun to grate with audiences in Vienna. His third Slavonic Dances had not been well received and Hans Richter, the conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic, repeatedly postponed the first Viennese performance of Dvořák's Sixth Symphony.

Dvořák was torn between his allegiance to his homeland and his admiration for German music. He really did not wish to have to choose between Prague and Vienna and in his music, he would always combine both German and Czech influences. Around 1883-5, his music became more German in character. Whether this was, as some commentators have suggested, an attempt to improve relations with Vienna or whether it was for simply artistic reasons, it is hard to tell. For whatever reason, the music Dvořák composed in this period is considered some of the finest he ever wrote; in particular the Seventh Symphony and the F minor Piano Trio.

In December 1882, Dvořák's mother had died. This Piano Trio was written in the early months of 1883. Its serious and tempestuous character suggests that it was the composer's response to her death. The first movement of the trio is the longest and most substantial. It begins softly on the strings. Soon we are thrown into a turbulent, romantic world of drama and passion. Dvořák often combines the violin and cello either playing in unison or an octave apart. This means they can balance the piano even at full volume. This Trio is often considered to be Brahmsian. But even Brahms would have been hard put to match this music in terms of passion and turbulence.

The second movement which plays the role of a traditional scherzo was originally placed third. Dvořák rightly realised that some kind of relief was needed after the first movement. Since this movement is in two time rather than three, it can hardly be considered a dance. Minor keys still predominate but the mood is generally more relaxed.

The *poco adagio* is considered one of his finest slow movements. The opening two ideas, the first solemn, the second less so, provide him with the material for the whole movement. For much of the time, the violin and cello either play in unison as before or in canon. In

some of the most poignant passages, the violin sings in a high register accompanied by broken chords on the piano. The solo piano introduces an exquisite coda. Here calm and rest are finally achieved.

The Finale combines German rigour with Czech charm. It is in three time although this is not obvious from the opening theme. Later on in the movement, Dvořák introduces a woolly waltz before returning to more rigorous musical development. The emotional turmoil of the first movement is largely, if not completely forgotten, as this magnificent piano trio ends with a *vivace* flourish.

David Winter

Pavel Haas Quartet

Veronika Jarůšková, Marek Zwiebel [violins]

Luosha Fang [viola]

Peter Jarůšek [cello]

with **Boris Giltburg** [piano]

Antonín Dvořák [1841-1904]

Piano Quintet No 2 in A major Op.81

1. *Allegro ma non tanto*
2. *Dumka: Andante con moto*
3. *Scherzo/Furiant: Molto vivace*
4. *Finale: Allegro*

Dvořák actually wrote two piano quintets though the first one is seldom performed. He wrote the first one, also in A major, in the summer of 1872, but seems to have forgotten about it until fifteen years later when his publisher was pressing him for new works. At this stage he unearthed a copy of the score the original quintet and tried to revise it. Clearly he felt this early work even with extensive revisions did not come up to standard and he immediately set about writing a second quintet in A major, which is the one we all know so well.

There are few works in the entire chamber music repertoire that have such an exquisitely beautiful opening - over a rippling piano accompaniment the cello breathes a gentle and wistful theme. This is rudely interrupted, in Dvořák's customary way, by a lively version of a fragment of the theme. This eventually gives way to a luminous vision of the theme in its original form culminating with the solo violin singing out the theme before another rude and boisterous interruption – piano triplets, viola staccato quavers over an ostinato rhythm. The second subject, in the composer's own instrument, the viola, follows the same abrupt style, initially quiet and melancholic, then loud and forceful, followed by a slow winding-down to the repeat of the exposition. The next time around it leads directly into the development with the same dynamic contrasts between yearning melancholy and wild gaiety, culminating with a dramatic statement of the main theme that moves immediately into the recapitulation extended by a boisterous coda.

The dream-like opening of the *Dumka* mirrors the opening of the first movement, but without the same rude interruptions. This quietly sad theme recurs throughout the movement, most distinctively in the viola's unmistakable voice. The second theme breaks in joyfully as a smiling duet between the violins. There is a brief central *vivace* section clearly related to the opening material, which soon returns, led by the viola. The same themes are then worked through again culminating in a long reconsideration of the increasingly hypnotic opening theme. The coda is an exquisitely quiet close.

The scherzo is dominated by the infectious gaiety and skipping rhythm of the main theme. There are subsidiary dances in different tempi but the main one keeps returning. The amorous trio is enlivened with the rhythm of the opening. The Quintet ends with a stirring finale, the energy levels stoked by a riotous scatter of invigorating themes, returning inevitably to the opening Rondo theme. There's an amusing mock fugue in the middle as if to say that even such an academic device can be made to dance. The end is jubilantly affirmative.

Francis Humphrys

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