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# TRIO GASPARD

Thursday 9 November, 7.30pm  
Djanogly Recital Hall

## PROGRAMME

Piano Trio No.22 in A, Hob.XV:9

**Joseph Haydn**

Elegy for piano trio, Op.23

**Josef Suk**

Piano Trio No.25 in E minor, Hob.XV:12

**Haydn**

### Interval

Piano Trio in E minor, Op 90, 'Dumky'

**Antonín Dvořák**

There is a Sennheiser Infrared enhanced hearing system in the Djanogly Recital Hall, please ask for a headset from our front-of-house staff.

Please ensure all mobile phones are switched off. Photography and video of the performance are not permitted.

# PROGRAMME NOTES

Piano Trio No.22 in A, Hob.XV:9

**Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)**

*Adagio*

*Vivace*

Haydn's piano trios grew out of the repertoire of mid-eighteenth-century chamber music intended primarily for domestic music-making. The keyboard parts tended to predominate, while the violin parts were treated as accompaniments, or even dispensable altogether. In addition, surviving baroque habits of thought still tended to treat the cello as a continuo instrument – in other words, it was expected to do little more than reinforce the bass of the keyboard part. As late as the 1780s and 90s publishers were still marketing Haydn's trios as 'Sonatas for harpsichord or Forte-piano with a violin and violoncello'. In these later works the keyboard still tends to be the dominant partner, though the violin, at least, has more of an independent part.

The Trio in A – No.9 in Anthony van Hoboken's long-established catalogue, No.22 in the more recent and more comprehensive listing by Haydn scholar HC Robbins Landon – was composed in 1785. It was published by the London violin-maker and music-publisher William Forster the following year, in a set of three with the Trio No.22 in A, Hob.XV:9 and a much earlier Trio, No.17 in F, Hob.XV:2, thought to date from the end of the 1760s or the beginning of the 1770s.

It is one of only three Haydn piano trios that open with a slow movement. Haydn's treatment of the two string instruments here is notable for giving them a greater degree of independence than was usual at the time, particularly in the passage, early on, when they sing together over a rippling accompaniment on the piano.

Complete contrast with this gentle, lyrical movement comes with the sprightly, alert finale. It is dominated by the opening idea, which does duty for the first and second main themes, one of Haydn's favourite procedures. Another one comes in the second half of the movement, when he engineers a so-called 'false reprise' – the opening theme appears to make its expected return towards the end of the movement, but the music has not yet worked its way back to the key it started in, and so there's more ground to cover before the genuine recapitulation can begin. It all adds up to a finale typical of Haydn's infectious vitality.

Elegy for piano trio, Op.23

**Josef Suk (1874-1935)**

Suk is one of the most important of the group of Czech composers who studied with Dvořák. After graduating from the Prague Conservatoire in 1891, he stayed on for a further year to study chamber music and composition. He became Dvořák's favourite pupil, and also his son-in-law, marrying his daughter Otilie in 1898.

Given his chamber music studies, and the many years he spent as the second violinist in the Bohemian (later re-named Czech) String Quartet, he wrote surprisingly few chamber works, particularly after the turn of the twentieth century. Though it dates from 1902, *Elegy* is one of the last of them. He composed it for an event commemorating the Czech writer Julius Zeyer (1841-1901), for two of whose plays he had composed incidental music. It was originally written for violin and cello, with string quartet, harmonium and harp, but in the same year Suk produced this more conventionally-scored version; the original remains unpublished.

The work is subtitled, “Under the impression of Zeyer’s *Vyšehrad*”, a reference to the writer’s epic poem recreating old Czech legends (*Vyšehrad* – pronounced ‘vish-er-rad’ – is the name of a ruined castle, overlooking the River Vltava as it flows into Prague, and evoked in the first movement of Smetana’s sequence of orchestral tone-poems *Ma Vlast*). The main theme’s passionate, yearning quality is enhanced by the piano’s insistently throbbing accompaniment. There are two brief, more vehement, episodes; the second of which quotes a theme from Dvořák’s opera, *Rusalka*, before a short chorale-like passage leads to the final return of the main theme, and the work’s quiet, withdrawn conclusion.

Piano Trio No.25 in E minor, Hob.XV:12

**Joseph Haydn**

*Allegro moderato*

*Andante*

*Rondo. Presto.*

The E minor Trio – Hoboken No.12, Landon No.25 – is the second of a group of three thought to date from 1788 or 1789. In August 1788, Haydn was short of money, and wrote to his publisher, Artaria, offering to compose a set of six string quartets or three piano trios. Artaria chose the trios, prompting Haydn to buy himself a new piano by one of his favourite Viennese makers, Wenzel Schanz.

The E minor Trio is the only one of the group in three movements; the others are in two. The first movement is serious, but not tragic in tone, dominated by the opening notes of the first main theme, which carry over into the start of the major-key second theme.

The remaining movements are both in E major. The song-like *Andante* is mostly relaxed and gentle, but occasionally takes a more poignantly introspective turn, and includes some surprising changes of key. The rondo finale, is bright and bubbly, with one minor-key episode, and an ending that manages to be both unexpectedly quiet and emphatic at the same time.

In a 1789 review of the set of three trios, the writer praised their construction, originality and seriousness, adding: “when played cleanly in all parts and with the proper expression, they yield the greatest enjoyment that this kind of music can provide.”

Piano Trio in E minor, Op.90, 'Dumky'  
*Lento maestoso/Allegro vivace –*  
*Poco adagio/Vivace non troppo –*  
*Andante/Vivace non troppo;*  
*Andante moderato/Allegretto scherzando;*  
*Allegro;*  
*Lento maestoso/Vivace.*

**Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)**

A dumka (plural: dumky) is a kind of elegiac narrative ballad originating in Ukraine. It took various forms, and from these Dvořák gradually evolved his own conception of it as a slow, melancholy piece interrupted by quicker, livelier sections. He included dumka movements in a number of works, but in the E minor Trio he took the bold step of basing an entire multi-movement work on this form.

He began it towards the end of 1890, and it was first performed in April the following year as part of a concert celebrating his award of an honorary doctorate by Charles University, Prague. Dvořák himself was the pianist, and the cellist was Hanuš Wihan, for whom Dvořák wrote his Cello Concerto four years later.

The 'Dumky' Trio is his most radical departure from classical forms. The six movements follow a key-sequence which defies symphonic logic, and all but the fifth are based on a striking contrast of slow and fast sections. Within this framework Dvořák succeeds in producing not only one of his most charmingly characteristic works, but also a sequence of surprisingly varied explorations of the same basic contrast of mood.

The first three movements are marked to be played without a break. The first begins with a stormy, impassioned outburst for cello and piano. The violin's quiet response includes a four-note figure echoed by the cello, which becomes an important element in the quick music that follows.

There is a Schubertian feel to the start of the second movement, with its plaintive cello melody, consisting initially of repeated notes, unfolding over static piano harmonies, and its hesitation between major and minor. The quick dance-sections are based on a polka rhythm. A short unaccompanied cello solo, marked 'cadenza in tempo', leads into the return of the slow music.

Violin and cello are muted for the beginning and end of No.3, the slow sections of which are built on a gentle mazurka-like rhythm. The opening reaches a passionate climax before the quick section takes over. Dvořák starts moving away from the slow-fast-slow-fast pattern of the first two movements; the return of the opening section is followed not by a repeat of the quick one but by an allegretto coda that gives the main theme a more wistful air.

The structure of the fourth movement is both more complex and more seamless than what we have heard so far. The moderately-paced opening section is interrupted by two brief quicker passages marked by continual fluctuations in speed.

When the opening returns, it accelerates into a quick section with an exuberant, completely new theme, before the opening music re-appears, winding down to a thoughtful conclusion.

The fifth movement is the exception mentioned earlier. It is the only one that begins quickly, in an initially ambiguous and hesitant 6/8 metre which is later more straightforward. The opening theme becomes that of the first contrasting section, which is only marginally slower than the allegro; the second contrasting section, too, is only slightly different in tempo. The last few bars are vigorous and purposeful.

The finale opens with a rhetorical flourish, leading eventually to a wild, stamping dance. There are a number of tempo fluctuations, but only one main slow section. The dance brings the work to its exhilarating close.

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## **TRIO GASPARD**

Jonian Ilias Kadesha - Violin

Vashti Hunter - Cello

Nicholas Rimmer - Piano

Founded in 2010, Trio Gaspard is one of the most sought-after piano trios of their generation, praised for their unique and fresh approach to the score. Trio Gaspard is regularly invited to perform at major international concert halls, such as Wigmore Hall, Berlin Philharmonie, Essen Philharmonie, Grafenegg Castle Austria, Salle Molière Lyon, NDR Rolf-Liebermann Hall, Hamburg and Shanghai Symphony Hall as well as making appearances at festivals such as Heidelberger Frühling, Mantua Chamber Music Festival, Boswiler Sommer and PODIUM Festival Esslingen. Important engagements over the past year include recitals at the BBC Proms, Unione Musicale Turin, Wigmore Hall, KKL Lucerne as well as at Berlin's Pierre Boulez Saal. A highlight of 2018 was performing Beethoven Triple Concerto in Switzerland under the baton of eminent musician and conductor, Gabor Takács-Nagy.

As well as exploring and championing the traditional piano trio repertoire, Trio Gaspard works regularly with contemporary composers and is keen to discover seldom-played masterpieces. In 2022, they performed Ethyl Smyth's Piano Trio in D minor at the BBC Proms, broadcasted live by the BBC. They have also played the rarely performed "Présence-Ballet Blanc" for piano trio and speaker by Bernd Alois Zimmermann, working alongside Urban Contemporary dancer Luka Fritsch. Their performance of this was recorded live at the Pierre Boulez Saal and was released on the trio's "Live in Berlin" CD, in cooperation with German Radio. The Trio is currently in process of an extensive commissioning project which sees composers such as Olli Mustonen, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Helena Winkelman, Sally Beamish, Kit Armstrong, Johannes Fischer and Leonid Gorokhov writing companion pieces to the Haydn trios. Their debut project with Chandos Records sees all of Haydn's 46 trios be recorded over the next five years alongside these commissioned contemporary

companion pieces. Volume one of which was released in 2022 to critical acclaim, including reviews in *The Strad*, *The Times* and *Limelight Magazine*. The former of which featured the album as The Strad Recommends and wrote “It’s truly a delight, and leaves this listener hungry for more”.

Trio Gaspard, whose members hail from Germany, Greece and the UK, has worked regularly with the co-founding member of the Alban Berg Quartet, Hatto Beyerle. They also studied at the European Chamber Music Academy, where they worked with Johannes Meissl (Artis Quartet), Ferenc Rados, Avedis Kouyoumdjian, Jérôme Pernoo and Peter Cropper (Lindsay Quartet). The trio already has considerable teaching experience, having given masterclasses at Kyung-Hee University in Seoul, at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin and at the Shanghai Chamber Music Festival 2016 and 2018, where they also sat on the jury of China’s national chamber music competition. Trio Gaspard held a fellowship of chamber music at the Royal Northern College of music in Manchester from 2017-2019, and have won first prizes and special prizes at the International Joseph Joachim Chamber Music Competition in Weimar, the 5<sup>th</sup> International Haydn Chamber Music Competition in Vienna and the 17th International Chamber Music Competition in Illzach, France. In 2012 they were awarded the “Wiener Klassik” Preis der Stadt Baden in Austria.

All three members are successful soloists in their own right and continue to pursue their solo careers, giving recitals and performing concertos in prestigious venues including the Tonhalle Zürich, Megaron Music Hall Athens, Teatro Verdi di Firenze, Konzerthaus Vienna, Berlin Philharmonie, Rudolfinium Hall Prague and Royal Festival Hall London. They are prize winners at international competitions including the Prague Spring Cello Competition, the Leopold Mozart Violin Competition, the Deutscher Musikwettbewerb, Parkhouse Award London and the Young Classical Artists Trust. The members of Trio Gaspard have also performed individually with other chamber groups, collaborating with eminent artists such as Steven Isserlis, Gidon Kremer, Kim Kashkashian, Nicolas Altstaedt, Martha Argerich, Vilde Frang, Pekka Kuusisto, Kit Armstrong, Ferenc Rados, Nils Mönkemeyer and the Quartetto di Cremona.