

NEW RELEASE INFORMATION FOR PRESS/MEDIA



Artist(s):	Petrof Piano Trio
Composer:	Beethoven, Tchaikovsky & Mendelssohn
Repertoire:	Piano Trios
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Discs:	Single CD/Standard Case
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Repertoire

Beethoven: Piano Trio in D Major Op. 70 No. 1 “Ghost”; Tchaikovsky: Piano Trio in A minor Op. 50; Mendelssohn: Songs without words (arr. Jakub Kowalewski)

The piano trios of *Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)* made a significant step towards artistic individuality and originality, in contrast with Haydn and Mozart, where one can find a range of occasional piano trios composed mainly for the purpose of private music performing. *Piano Trio in D Major Op70 No1* is the first of the two trios issued in 1809 and dedicated to Countess Erdödy. Of the two trios it gained more prominence, and is known as the ‘Ghost’. The author of this nickname was the major pianist and a composer, Karl Czerny, who – in 1842 – writing about the second movement, said that it reminded him of the apparition of the ghost in Shakespeare’s ‘Hamlet’. However, this movement is also important from the compositional perspective as well, with its innovative harmonic procedures and overall mysterious, almost controlled atmosphere. This trio is the only one, of all Beethoven’s trios, which consists of three movements, and it stands entirely on the contrast between the vast and grievous second movement and the other two, outermost, movements. Beethoven composed the D Major Trio immediately after writing the Sonata for Cello and Piano Op 69, where he wrote a distinctive part for the cello. This was unusual; even in baroque sonatas the cello was only given the part of accompanying continuo, and here it is visible that Beethoven is beginning a new phase, which involves great interpretational requirements, leading towards performing this chamber music in front of a wider musical audience.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893) did not write much chamber music; nevertheless his legacy is very distinct in this genre. At the end of January 1882, Tchaikovsky finished the trio. It was created in Rome, where he was staying at the time. The premiere took place on 11 March, 1882, exactly one year after the death of Nikolai Rubinstein – a great friend of Tchaikovsky. Tchaikovsky dedicated the trio to Rubinstein and the composition therefore gained its subtitle “In memory of a great artist.” The A Minor Piano Trio is magnificent not only for its scale, but for its compactness of expression as well. The two-movement formal arrangement of this composition is distinctive. Its first movement is composed in a free sonata form and the second consists of a theme and twelve variations ending with a coda. The last variation, together with the coda, forms an individual unit. Having composed this trio he never wrote another piano trio or any other chamber music with piano.



During the most productive part of his life **Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847)** composed eight volumes of piano pieces named "Songs without Words". Each opus consists of six songs in which the author uses various compositional characters. Some of them – over the years and during their public interpretation – became so well-known and popular, that transcriptions of them for various instrumental parts started to occur. The three "Songs Without Words" which are added to this CD as a bonus, were arranged for piano trio by the Polish composer, Jakub Kowalewski (b.1977).

Performers

Martina Schulmeisterová – *piano* Jan Schulmeister – *violin* Kamil Žvak – *cello*

The **PETROF TRIO** originated from an idea of the violinist of the Wihan Quartet, Jan Schulmeister, in 2009. Its members are prestigious chamber players, who bring years of concert experience and also youthful energy to their concert programmes.

In the same year that it was formed, the ensemble became the resident trio of the PETROF Company, who wanted to associate its tradition and quality with top-level concert artists. The trio's repertoire includes pieces from composers from the early classics to impressionism (Haydn, Mozart, Schumann, Brahms, Dvořák, Lalo, Fauré, Debussy, etc.). The ensemble also enriches its repertoire with compositions from the 20th and 21st centuries.

Jan Schulmeister was born Moravia. He comes from a family with a musical tradition stretching more than 150 years. He became a founder member of the Wihan Quartet in 1985. In 1988, the Wihan won the Prague Spring Festival Competition and in 1990 the Quartet was awarded First Prize in the Trapani International Chamber Music Competition in Sicily. In 1991 the Wihan Quartet received both the First Prize and the Audience Prize in the London International String Quartet Competition. The foreman of the jury in the competition was Lord Menuhin and this competition launched the Quartet's international career.

Jan has recorded more than 40 CDs with the Wihan Quartet, including two complete Beethoven Quartet Cycles. He has given many concerts in Europe, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Middle and Far East Countries. In addition, he has given chamber music masterclasses in Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff and the Menuhin School in the UK. He is a visiting tutor at Trinity College of Music in London.

Martina Schulmeisterová achieved much success in competition in her earlier years. She performs regularly throughout Europe and Asia. She has been a piano professor at the P.J.Vejvanovský Conservatory in Kroměříž since 2002. She is married to Jan Schulmeister

Kamil Žvak started playing cello at the age of six. As well as giving many chamber music concerts Kamil Žvak also performs in several European countries as a soloist. He has been a cello professor at the P.J.Vejvanovský Conservatory in Kroměříž since 2010.

The Trio's last CD release, containing trios by Mendelssohn, Bruch and Lalo, was released on NIMBUS ALLIANCE (NI6219). The CD received many good reviews including The Strad who said: ***The scherzo is delightfully played, light and flowing, and in the finale the players demonstrate a masterly command of scale, negotiating its emotional turbulence with a prevailing sense of delicacy.***

Press/Media and Marketing

The CD will be fully serviced to all UK classical music press and radio. Advertising will include major appropriate music magazines and publications. For more details, and to request a review sample and/or an interview request, please contact John Cronin at Music & Media Consulting Limited.