

BEETHOVEN
STORIONI TRIO
amsterdam



SUPER AUDIO CD

PIANO TRIO NO.2
PIANO TRIO NO.5 "Ghost Trio"
"Geister Trio"

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Piano Trio No.2 in E flat, Op.1 No.2

①	Adagio – Allegro vivace	12. 28
②	Largo con espressione	9. 46
③	Scherzo (Allegro)	3. 40
④	Finale (Presto)	7. 17

Piano Trio No.5 in D, Op.70 No.1 "Ghost"

⑤	Allegro vivace e con brio	10. 22
⑥	Largo assai ed espressivo	9. 26
⑦	Prest	8. 00

Storioni Trio Amsterdam

Bart van de Roer – piano

Wouter Vossen – violin

Marc Vossen - violoncello

Recorded: Eindhoven, Muziekcentrum Frits Philips, The Netherlands, 9/2004

Producer: Wilhelm Hellweg

Balance engineer: Jean-Marie Geijsen

Recording engineer: Jean-Marie Geijsen

Total playing-time: 61. 10

"We would like to thank Pepe Grégoire for allowing us to use his house for the photo session with the Storioni Trio."

On May 9, 1795, the publishing house Artaria placed an advertisement in the Wiener Zeitung announcing the publication of Ludwig van Beethoven's Opus 1, a volume containing three piano trios: anyone interested could subscribe to the volume. Orders soon came pouring in, as music-lovers knew the 24-year-old Beethoven to be the eccentric, yet brilliant pianist who had come to the city from Bonn to study composition with Haydn. Thanks to the support of Prince Karl von Lichnowsky, who had even provided him with an apartment in which to live, Beethoven had remained in Vienna. Among the subscribers were many amateur musicians, who must have been rather surprised when they picked up their volume of trios. The three separate parts penned on hand-dipped paper made up an unusually thick package. It turned out to be impossible to play through the trios prima vista: they were unusually long and difficult, and clearly first needed a great deal of study.

The new acquisition presented the amateurs with something rather different than expected. Beethoven's predecessors had considered the piano trio to be simple home entertainment, and had therefore not set too high a level: a trio consisted of three movements, was not too profound, and was reasonably easy to play. This was in strong contrast to the string quartet. Thanks to Haydn's trail-blazing quartets, this had turned into an ambitious genre, in which a composer was expected to invest all his genius. Haydn was the first composer to grant each of the four strings a fully fledged part, in which they contributed equally to the music. The piano trio was considered more as a refined piano sonata, with the cellist reinforcing the weak bass notes of the fortepiano and the violinist complementing the melodic lines in the piano part.

Beethoven threw all conventions overboard. He bestowed almost symphonic dimensions on his piano trios by fitting each composition out with four movements. He replaced the usual minuet with a scherzo, and in the slow

movements he achieved an unusually profound tone for the genre. The pianist was given a virtuoso role, whereas the roles of the violinist and cellist, as in the string quartet, had become both fully fledged and independent.

All evidence demonstrates that, three-and-a-half years after the death of Mozart, Beethoven wished to profile himself as an innovator. According to some biographers, he managed to do this on his own steam: after all, he was a genius. However, it is more likely that he took advantage of his association with other musicians and his lessons in composition. While he was studying with Haydn, his teacher was busy working on his last series of piano trios and string quartets. Beethoven was able, as it were, to peer over Haydn's shoulder. He also took violin lessons from Ignaz Schuppanzigh, who played first violin in Vienna's most prominent string quartet. Schuppanzigh had already performed all the major quartets of Mozart and Haydn with his ensemble, in close association with both composers, and was thus able to provide Beethoven with first-hand accounts of the development of the string quartet into a fully fledged genre. Equally inspiring were the composition lessons he received from Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, the Kapellmeister at the Stefansdom, to whom Beethoven had turned when Haydn left to spend 11/2 years in London. Albrechtsberger greatly admired Bach and had many copies of his works in his possession. In fact, the lessons in counterpoint that Beethoven received from Albrechtsberger were so thorough, that he – after only 11/2 years of lessons (three times per week) – was able to employ polyphony in his writing in a masterly fashion. This was very useful with regard to the composition of his trios. In the dramatic harmonies and whimsical complexities of Bach's music, Beethoven also discovered an incentive to break through the well-balanced classicism of Haydn and Mozart.

Naturally, Beethoven himself played the piano part in the first performance of the trios during one of the weekly

soirées given by Prince von Lichnowsky, together with the violinist Schuppanzigh and the cellist from his string quartet. Anyone who was of any importance in Vienna was present that evening. This performance confirmed Beethoven's reputation as the most promising composer of his generation.

Of the trios, the Piano Trio No. 2 in G is the longest, and also the only one to have a slow introduction. Various musicologists insist that they hear 'pre-echoes' of Schubert and Rossini in the work. The *Largo con espressione* is reputed to be one of the most poetic and lyrical slow movements in Beethoven's entire oeuvre.

Although Beethoven first set of piano trios had been highly successful, he was to wait no less than thirteen years before once again trying his hand at the genre. In the late summer of 1808, he completed the two piano trios of Opus 70, shortly after finishing work on his Symphony No. 6 and the two cello sonatas of Opus 69. These trios differ enormously to his first attempt at the genre: the form of the compositions is even more adventurous, the harmonies even more daring, and the music possesses an even stronger dramatic expressiveness. The Piano Trio in D, Op.70/1, is nicknamed the *Geistertrio*, which is derived from the spooky and suspenseful slow movement, *Largo assai ed espressivo*. The modulations from D minor to C major are exceptionally eccentric, as are the enormous dynamic contrasts, the tremolos in the piano part and the abrupt pauses. The composer Carl Czerny, who was also a pupil of Beethoven's, wrote in 1842 that the movement reminded him of the first appearance of the ghost in Hamlet (thereby providing the trio with its nickname). He probably did not know that Beethoven had jotted down his first attempts at the slow movement on the same page in his sketchbook as some ideas for an opera based on Shakespeare's Macbeth. The slow movement is flanked by two

fast movements, Allegro vivace e con brio and Presto, in which Beethoven combined the three instruments with even greater imagination than in his first trios. The writer E.T.A. Hoffmann mentioned the work together with his Symphony No. 5 as the starting point of a completely new musical era.

Dimitri van der Werf

English translation: Fiona J. Stroker-Gale

Storioni Trio Amsterdam

The Storioni Trio Amsterdam was founded in 1995 by Bart van de Roer (piano), Wouter Vossen (violin) and Marc Vossen (cello). The Trio derives its name from the Laorentius Storioni violin from Cremona, which dates from 1794 and is played by Wouter Vossen. The instrument belonging to Marc Vossen is a Giovanni Grancino cello from Milan, dating from 1700. In order to perfect its ensemble-playing, the Trio has worked over the years with great musicians such as Isaac Stern, Mstislav Rostropovich, Menahem Pressler, and Ralph Kirshbaum, as well as members of the Emerson Quartet and the Vermeer Quartet.

The Storioni Trio Amsterdam offers an expansive repertoire ranging from Haydn and Mozart via Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Ravel and Shostakovich, to stimulating works by contemporary composers. Composer Kevin Volans has written a triple concerto for the 10th anniversary of the Storioni Trio

Amsterdam, of which the world première is planned for October 2005. The Trio has received various prizes and awards, and performs regularly on radio and television. The CDs recorded by the Storioni Trio Amsterdam have all received great critical acclaim.

The Storioni Trio Amsterdam performs chamber music with artists such as Nobuko Imai, Gerard Caussé, Vladimir Mendelssohn, Rainer Kussmaul, Elisabeth von Magnus, Marina Shaguch, Emma Johnson, and Massimo Mercelli. Also, the Trio has been invited to play as soloists with the Münchner Kammerorchester (= Munich Chamber Orchestra), the Noord Nederlands Orkest (= North Netherlands Symphony Orchestra) and the Koninklijke Filharmonie van Vlaanderen (= Flanders Royal Philharmonic Orchestra).

The Storioni Trio Amsterdam regularly performs at all major venues in the Netherlands, such as the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Doelen concert hall in Rotterdam, and the Muziekcentrum Vredenburg in Utrecht. As the “ensemble in residence”, the Storioni Trio Amsterdam has its own chamber-music series at the Muziekcentrum Frits Philips in Eindhoven.

On an international level, the Trio is also highly active, giving concerts at the most important music centres in the world, such as the Weill Recital Hall (Carnegie Hall), the Frick Collection in New York, and the Wigmore Hall in London. Moreover, the Trio regularly performs at various festivals, gives concerts throughout Europe, and goes on tour to India, the Middle East, Japan and the United States.

www.storionitrio.com

English translation: Fiona J. Stroker-Gale

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Polyhymnia International was founded in 1998 as a management buy-out by key personnel of the former Philips Classics Recording Center.

For more info: www.polyhymnia.nl

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SUPER AUDIO CD

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Beethoven - Piano Trios Nos. 2 & 5 - Storioni Trio Amsterdam

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can also be played
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