

### **Poinsett Piano Trio**

**Trio in C major, KV. 548 (1788)      Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)**

Allegro

Andante cantabile

Allegro

Piano trios emerged in late-eighteenth century Vienna, initially intended for amateur musicians to play at home. The first trios for piano, violin, and cello were essentially “accompanied sonatas”, piano pieces with easier and less important string parts. In these pieces the cello mostly doubled the left hand of the piano, while the violin played secondary material that was complementary to the melodies in the piano.

Joseph Haydn developed the roles of the string players, but it fell to Mozart to write the first trios with truly independent lines for violin and especially for the cello in a set of three trios published in 1786.

While the violin and cello parts exhibit greater independence and significance than in earlier trios, the piano still clearly takes the lead role. In the sonata-form first movement Mozart is uncharacteristically concise in his use of melodies – presenting relatively few themes, but developing them over the course of the movement. The second movement is also in sonata form, in which the strings comment on the lyrical melody played by the piano. Each instrument takes turns in the spotlight. The third movement is very much like the rondo finales to many of Mozart’s piano concertos – the main theme is first played by the piano alone and then by the strings just eight bars later.

### **Trio in C minor, Op. 101 (1886)**

**Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)**

Allegro energico

Presto non assai

Andante grazioso

Allegro

In the century following Mozart’s trios, the piano trio became an important genre of composition for many composers. Brahms wrote three piano trios with violin and cello (plus one for violin and horn and a very late work with clarinet and cello). The Trio in C minor was the last of his three trios for piano, violin, and piano, written near Lake Thun in Switzerland where he spent the summer.

The Trio in C minor is remarkably compact. Throughout the work Brahms constantly toys with listeners’ perceptions of rhythm and meter – with syncopations, cross-rhythms, and hemiolas abounding, making the music feel rhythmically unstable a lot of the time. There are frequent stresses on different beats of the bar that contradict regular metrical groupings, instruments playing 3 (triplets) against 2 (quavers) or 3 against 4 (semiquavers), and phrases expanding and contracting in length unpredictably. The first 20-30 seconds of the first movement are a great example of this, but it is probably easiest to hear in the third-movement Andante in which Brahms writes themes that group meters of different lengths. Amongst all this the fleet-footed and light character of the second movement can feel like a respite from the rhythmic complexity, but if one listens closely and tries to (mentally!) conduct, one will find that the ambiguity of rhythm and meter extends to this movement as well.

### **Interval**

**Introduzione e Rondo: Haydn Go Seek (2008) William Bolcom (b. 1938)**

Molto Adagio

Rondo: Allegro giocoso

Pulitzer Prize-winning American composer William Bolcom was born in Seattle and studied in the USA and with both Darius Milhaud and Olivier Messiaen in France. He now teaches at the University of Michigan. While many of his pieces are influenced by jazz, cabaret, and ragtime, this trio draws instead from the witty and charming music of Joseph Haydn. It was one of eighteen piano trios commissioned by the Haydn Festival Eisenstadt as a part of the observation of the bicentennial of Haydn's death in 2009, and first performed as a part of the festival. So while the gestures, rhythms, characters, and textures definitely imitate the whimsical style of Haydn, it is all with a twist as befits a piece written in the 21st century.

**Trio in E minor, Op. 90 "Dumky" (1891) Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)**

Lento Maestoso (E minor and major)

Poco Adagio (C# minor)

Andante (A major)

Andante Moderato (Quasi Tempo di Marcia) (D minor and major)

Allegro (E♭ major and minor)

Lento Maestoso (C minor and major)

Dvořák's "Dumky" Trio, was the last of his five works for piano trio. However, with the help of famous composers including Brahms, it was works like the "Dumky" – embracing his Bohemian heritage and the legacy of Czech folk music in combination with the forms and musical language of the Austro-German romantic tradition – that led to his wide-spread fame as a composer, and later to his invitation to teach, compose, and lead the National Conservatory of Music in the United States from 1892-95. "Dumky" is the plural of the Czech folk "dumka", which was a traditional sung lament. Dvořák wrote several other dumka-like movements in his chamber music, but the "Dumky" Trio is unique in that rather than applying the style to a single movement, the work is a suite of six dumky, each of a modest length. The piece was such a hit at the premiere performance that Dvořák (at the piano) and his friends Ferdinand Lachner (violin) and Hanus Wihan ('cello), immediately took the piece on a forty-concert tour, just before the composer left for America.

Programme notes by Christopher Hutton, Poinsett Piano Trio © 2013

**Poinsett Piano Trio**

David Gross, Deirdre Hutton, and Christopher Hutton founded the Trio in 2008. Living in Greenville, South Carolina, they teach at Furman University, an institution with a performance-based music program. They made their first international tour to New Zealand in 2010. On this return tour they will play 13 concerts up and down the country from Kaitaia to Alexandra.

The ensemble is named in honour of Joel Roberts Poinsett, a statesman, physician, and botanist from South Carolina, who had had an international life and career: living in England as a child, training in medical school in Scotland, travelling extensively in Europe and South America, and later was elected to Congress before serving as Minister (ambassador) to Mexico. Poinsett is most remembered today as the discoverer of the Mexican Poinsettia plant.

Pianist **David Gross** was born in Berlin and presented his first public performance at the age of seven. He earned prizes at the international piano competitions in Marsala (1988), and Bremen (1993). He was educated at the Hochschule Munich, Hochschule Hannover, Yale University, and the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana. David has taught at Western Michigan University, Goshen College and the Hochschule "Hanns Eisler" in Berlin (State Conservatory), and is currently Associate Professor of Piano at Furman University.

**Deirdre Hutton** is the only member of the group to have been born in the United States, and holds dual American and Irish citizenship. She is an avid solo, chamber and orchestral performer having played at numerous music festivals throughout the United States including the National Repertory Orchestra, National Orchestral Institute, the Bowdoin Summer Music Festival, and the Eastern Music Festival. In addition, Deirdre has performed in orchestras in the US and Europe. Deirdre studied at the Eastman School of Music and earned her Master's degree at Northwestern University. She is currently Adjunct Professor of Violin at Furman University and also teaches a private studio of talented high-school students.

Cellist **Christopher Hutton** has performed in a broad range of settings, in his home country of New Zealand the United States, and Europe. He served as co- principal cellist in the New World Symphony Orchestra and has played in the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra as well as other orchestras in the United States. Christopher studied at Boston University, and earned his Masters and Doctorate at the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music. He later taught at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the University of Delaware, and the Eastern Music Festival before joining the faculty at Furman University in 2003 where he is Associate Professor of Violoncello and String Chamber Music.