

Josiah CARR (1994—)

time and glue (2017)

Josiah is a composer, conductor and performer based in Auckland, New Zealand. He has completed his MMus (Composition) in 2019 studying under Dr. Leonie Holmes. He has worked with the NZSO, APO, NZTrio and ACE Brass along with many other performers and ensembles throughout the country. He was the APO Young Composer-in-Residence for 2016–17, and was the National Youth Orchestra Composer-in-Residence for 2018.

“a waste of time and glue.” This piece takes its inspiration from a poem by New Zealand poet Emma Harris. I was particularly captured by the poem Glue and the nostalgic way it captured experiences she had as a child which I personally related with. In the poem she discusses how she remembers her father attempting to glue back fragments of different objects back together that had been broken throughout the week. I related with this, but also liked the reminiscent way it portrayed these memories.

In this piece, I have approached the piano trio in a way which directly responds to the nature of the poetry. The piano acts as the glue in the piece; trying to hold together small fragments and ideas the violinist and cellist present individually and together.

As these ideas develop, things become more energetic as things struggle to fit together as they perhaps should be which leads to a break-down in energy and momentum. As the piece progresses further and energy develops again, the ideas in both violin and cello develop to a point where things are eventually mended together as the string parts join the pianists melodic material.

— Josiah Carr

Joseph HAYDN (1732–1800)

Piano Trio 41 in G major, Hob. XV:41 (1767)

Allegro — Menuet — Adagio — Finale. Presto

We often recognise Haydn as the “Father of the Symphony” or “Father of the String Quartet”; however, Haydn was not just an important composer of symphonies and more or less the inventor of the string quartet, he also wrote a great many piano trios—no less than 45!

It is a rare treat to hear this piano trio in G major, which was composed around 1767 (possibly dating as far back as 1760) during his early period of writing for this instrumentation. We hear a very traditional form of writing for this time: the piano plays the dominant role; the violin takes some melodic lines and often colours the piano's melodic line and the cello primarily doubles the bass line. The sonority of the Fortepiano of Haydn's day carried a softer tone and “tinkling” quality which was often enhanced or developed by tonal strengthening of the violin and cello.

The G major trio showcases this musical purity and delicacy. The first movement is very much a stately dance with embellishments, playful dialogue with an occasional rustic outburst of striking chords. The

second is an elegant and pure dance. The major key of the Minuet reflects light and warmth while the Trio takes us into momentary darkness and cold tones in the minor mode before returning to the sunny Minuet. The Adagio is other-worldly, with a reflective and searching piano solo accompanied by the strings. It is filled with luscious embellishments and singing lines from the piano in what feels like a heartfelt and intimate improvisation. The finale is full of snappy rhythmic melodies thrown around with charming interplay between all three members before ending with a flourish.

Antonín DVOŘÁK (1841–1904)

Piano Trio 3 in F minor, Op 65 (1883)

Allegro ma non troppo — Allegretto grazioso; Meno mosso — Poco Adagio — Finale. Allegro con brio

Antonin Dvořák's Piano Trio No. 3 Op. 65 in F-minor was written in a critical time in his career and by many is regarded as a milestone. It is uncharacteristically stormy and serious, therefore, there is no use looking for his "Slavonic" cheerful folk style. It is supposed that Dvořák was grieving the death of his mother who died shortly before he started composing his Piano Trio. He composed the work rapidly, but not without difficulty, in February and March 1883. His manuscript indicates that he had considerable trouble in deciding on the final shape of the score and the published version differs substantially from the first draft; Dvořák made numerous changes including altering the order of the middle movements to their present arrangement. The first performance was given on 27 October 1883 in Mladá Boleslav with Dvořák at the piano.

For a number of years, Dvořák received support, mentorship and inspiration from Brahms, which resulted in composing his most Brahmsian work. Certainly, there is visible influence of Brahms's compositional language in Dvořák's Piano Trio with its majestic chords, bold harmony and orchestral writing. Regardless, the work remains one of the most magnificent pieces in the piano trio repertoire manifesting Dvořák's unique style and talent.

The first movement *Allegro* is an epic sonata, the longest in the entire piece. The Brahmsian manner is apparent in the musical rhetoric and the writing is dense with huge dynamic range and rhythmic subtlety, which also brings another great composer to mind: Franz Schubert. The dark themes are strongly Slavic with their rhythms and melodic intervals while the bright ones are lyrical, more universal in their haunting simplicity.

The second movement *Allegretto grazioso* is a scherzo written in 2/4 with heavy accents and strong cross-rhythmic patterns. Rhythmic tension takes a different form in the slower central section, with a syncopated accompanying figure in the piano's right hand which, the Dvořák scholar John Clapham suggested, has its origin in a type of traditional Slovak dance.

The slow movement *Poco Adagio* is a beautiful elegy filled with nostalgic melodies full of sadness, hope and passion. It is the true heart of the trio, as the composer finally allows the listener to sit down, take a breath and focus on the inner thoughts.

The finale *Allegro con brio* brings back the powerful energy and dark, haunting themes. Dance rhythms underpin the movement, in the quieter passages as much as the more energetic ones. The ending, however, takes a few unexpected turns: a recall of the first movement's theme, then the motives from the scherzo appear followed by a glorious variation of the slow movement's theme. The Trio finishes on

a hopeful note with the theme presented in a vibrant F Major, as if the spell of the entire trio had somehow broken bringing a cathartic restoration.

Gabriel FAURÉ (1845–1924)

Piano Trio in D minor, Op 120 (1923)

Allegro ma non troppo — Andantino — Allegro vivo

Composed in 1922, the D minor Piano Trio Op.120 represents a very late chamber work in Fauré's life. It was premiered in 1923, just a year before the composer's death. Fauré was indeed unable to attend the first performance due to his fragile health, but his disappointment was compensated when he had the chance to sit in on a rehearsal of the trio by Alfred Cortot (piano), Jacques Thibaut (violin) and Pablo Casals (cello). The two performances which followed these rehearsals consolidated the success of the work and went some way towards cementing Fauré's reputation today, having previously been regarded by many as a mere salon composer.

The work was conceived initially as a trio for clarinet (or violin), cello and piano, but this idea was abandoned fairly early on, admitting in letters to friends that his musical stimulus had been missing. Fauré eventually rediscovered his passion for the work, with the instrumentation as we know it today, excitedly stating "*I have finally started writing again!*"

The work is at times so harmonically progressive and unusual, it gives a feeling of being somewhat lost, but this also suggests that it is a deeply personal work and introverted in nature, not completely dissimilar to Beethoven's 'late' period of composition. Like Beethoven, Fauré also suffered hearing loss later in life, especially in the outer ranges of pitch, which points to a reason why many of his late works are based predominantly in the middle range.

Comparisons will be made with the very famous and successful piano trio of Ravel, composed 8 years earlier. However, while the sound worlds can be compared there are quite distinct compositional differences which characterise the two works in very different ways. While the Ravel conforms to traditional structures including forms such as Pantoums and Passacaglias, the Fauré seems to have large passages that are free from structure and 'live in the moment', even though the first and last movements resemble sonata and rondo forms respectively. Form-following is not the best way to enjoy this work though. It has undoubted beauty and gives us a great insight into the inspiration Fauré experienced late on in his life.