

# Quantum Clarinet Trio I

**Elena Veronesi** clarinet  
**Johannes Przygodda** cello  
**Bokyoung Kim** piano

**Arvo Pärt** (b.1935)  
Mozart-Adagio (1992; arr. for clarinet trio 2017) 8'

**Ferdinand Ries** (1784–1838)  
Trio No.2 in B flat, Op.28 (ca.1809) 20'  
*i. Allegro*  
*ii. Scherzo: Allegro vivace*  
*iii. Adagio*  
*iv. Rondo. Allegro ma non troppo*

**Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770–1827)  
Piano Trio No.4 in B flat, Op.11, 'Gassenhauer' (1797) 18'  
*i. Allegro con brio*  
*ii. Adagio*  
*iii. Tema con variazioni*

**Robert Muczynski** (1929–2010)  
Fantasy Trio, Op.26 (1969) 13'  
*i. Allegro energico*  
*ii. Andante con espressione*  
*iii. Allegro deciso*  
*iv. Introduction and Finale. Andante molto e sostenuto*

**Quantum Clarinet Trio** is a Britten Pears Young Artist for 2024/25, here for a two-week residency on the Chamber Music in Residence course.

The Quantum Clarinet Trio has established itself as a leading clarinet trio of its generation. The three musicians met while studying at the University Mozarteum in Salzburg and have played together since 2019. Just a few months later, the trio won third prize at the Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition (USA).

The Trio's debut CD, featuring works by Brahms, Kahn, and Frühling, was released in autumn 2023. It received enthusiastic reviews and was nominated for an Opus Klassik award for Best Chamber Music Recording 2024.

Regular performers on the international chamber music scene, the Trio is committed to bringing their audiences rediscovered treasures, along with the classic masterpieces. Dedicated to contemporary music and actively collaborating with composers, the Trio premiered *Unintended Consequences*, a work written for them by Stefano Seghedoni and Moon Unit Zappa, in 2024 (Modena, Italy).

In physics, a quantum is the minimum amount of any physical entity involved in an interaction and for this reason indivisible. Music, as a quantum, is the essence that brings this trio together.

## Arvo Pärt: Mozart-Adagio

Pärt wrote this Adagio after the death in 1990 of a close friend, the Russian violinist Oleg Kagan, whom he believed to be one of the best Mozart interpreters of his day. 'I decided,' he said 'to send him a final greeting with a composition permeated by the sound of his beloved Mozart.' In a further homage, he scored it for Kagan's favourite chamber ensemble, the piano trio. Pärt based the work on the second movement of Mozart's F major Piano Sonata K.280 which he uses in its entirety, without missing a note. His own contribution is restricted to a simple introduction and coda, along with a gentle, ongoing 'commentary': the result is a unique and deeply-felt lament.

## Ferdinand Ries: Trio No.2

Nowadays, Ferdinand Ries is remembered primarily for his relationship with Beethoven, first as his pupil and later his friend, secretary and biographer. In his day, however, Ries was regarded not only as one of Europe's finest pianists but also as a first-rate composer who ranked 'with the great masters of the age'.

When the teenage Ries arrived in Vienna from Bonn, Beethoven – who barely ever accepted students – took charge of his musical education. A few years later, Ries was suddenly faced with conscription into the Austrian army and had to flee back to Bonn. The trio almost certainly dates from around this time, and the fact that it underwent several reprints suggests it was extremely well-received. He writes lyrically for all three instruments and – for the most part – gives them equal importance, although the often virtuosic piano part was clearly designed to show off his own performing skills.

Unsurprisingly, given how recently Ries had left the tutelage of Beethoven, the work clearly shows the influence of his teacher's Gassenhauer trio, which had been published – for the same forces – a decade earlier. And while imitation may be considered the sincerest form of flattery, Beethoven saw it differently. 'Ries' he declared 'copies me too much'.

## Ludwig van Beethoven: Piano Trio No.4 'Gassenhauer'

In the last years of the 18th century, the clarinet was something of a novelty and was only just beginning to find its place as a regular chamber instrument. Mozart had led the way, his friendship with the celebrated clarinettist Anton Stadler inspiring half a dozen chamber works. A decade later, Beethoven was writing for Josef Bäcker, a relatively obscure Austrian player he often performed with and whose tone he was said to have admired.

The nickname 'Gassenhauer' comes from the final movement, a set of variations based on a theme from a comic opera that was playing to sell-out audiences in Vienna. A *gassenhauer* was basically a street song and this particular tune had really caught the public imagination: it was being sung or whistled constantly on every street in the city.

Contemporary reaction to the trio was mixed, the public describing it as everything from 'easy' and 'melodious' to 'difficult' and 'unnaturally composed'. The press, however, was favourable, with one writer commenting that 'it certainly flows along more smoothly than many of the composer's other works and makes a very good ensemble with its keyboard accompaniment'.

## Robert Muczynski: Fantasy Trio

Robert Muczynski was born in Chicago and has been called the most important neoclassical composer of post-war America. Although his music is essentially tonal, his habit of shifting chord positions – as well as his fondness for writing an odd number of beats in a bar – gives it an unmistakably modern edge.

His *Fantasy Trio* appeared in 1969. Its restless and somewhat jazzy opening Allegro is curiously reminiscent of both Stravinsky and Kurt Weill and leads to a lyrical but cool Andante, the romantic melody tempered by its sparse harmonies. The mood is shattered by another Allegro – barely two minutes of frantic activity in the form of a savage, stomping dance that fades as abruptly as it began. And to end – perversely – an Introduction: a sober, almost morose section that leads to a catchy, nervous finale, bringing everything to a breathless close.

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