

Malvern Concert Club  
Review 10 March 2016  
Trio Martinů

The Trio Martinů, for their first appearance at Malvern Concert Club, presented piano trios by two of their Czech compatriots, Martinů and Dvořák, and Schubert's late, great Trio in E flat. There is something very special about the way these musicians make music: a combination of intense concentration and an apparent ease of expression arising from absolute technical security. There are no individual egos here, just three fine musicians dedicated to making music together. Their programme opened with Martinů's second trio in D minor, composed in America soon after the Second World War, a piece characterized by an unsettled harmonic and rhythmic language. For this ensemble, the abrupt changes and strange cadences were entirely natural and in their performance utterly convincing. Dvořák's Trio No. 1 followed, a relatively early piece composed at a time when the composer was still seeking an individual style. Again, the honest, unassuming style of performance allowed the music to speak for itself. In both works, there was no hint of coercion from the musicians, no suggestion that the music needed 'expressing' or interpreting – a wonderful and rare artistic illusion.

After the interval, the performance of Schubert's Trio No. 2 in E flat fulfilled all expectations. Composed in 1827 and one of this composer's last works, this piece is built of musical ideas that are often bewitchingly simple, yet cast over a huge temporal canvas. The Trio Martinů are the perfect musicians to bring off such challenging music, perfectly pacing those long, winding sequences and marking the more incisive passages with precision and always perfect ensemble. For the encore we were treated to the dramatic closing section of Dvořák's Dumky Trio, leaving us wanting to hear much more from this remarkable ensemble.

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