



Musical stories told in elegant tones

The Trio E.T.A. is a young ensemble whose future is something to look forward to with excitement. In the coming months, this versatile piano trio will be giving a large number of concerts across Germany and in February 2023 will release its debut CD.



"[...] here, in the Trio E.T.A. from Hamburg, a not even three-year-young ensemble is playing that casts a spell over the ears and hearts of its listeners. Because **Elene Meipariani, Till Schuler** and **Till Hoffmann** succeed with great immediacy in tapping the power of music to rouse deep emotions and create excitement. [...] A trio that completely immerses itself in Mendelssohn's musical world as if it had just been freshly written down on the manuscript paper." That was the enthusiastic reaction of the daily *Westfälische Nachrichten* to the Trio E.T.A.,

while the *Münstersche Zeitung* praised the ensemble's ability to shape "refined melodies" and to tell "musical stories".

This young ensemble, founded in 2019, has "a special ambition to form a homogeneous yet richly nuanced ensemble, a collective trio sound that is unique and distinctive in nature." This aspiration also won the day at the German Music Competition (DMW), from which the trio emerged as a prize-winner in 2021, along with inclusion in the concert promotion scheme and the making of a CD recording for the GENUIN label. It already received first concert opportunities at the Konzerthaus Berlin, the Europäisches Kulturforum Mainau, the Beethovenhaus in Bonn, the Weingartner Musiktage and the Weilburger Schlosskonzerte. Alongside its concerts, the ensemble and its musical activities have often featured in radio and TV productions since it was founded. For example, the Trio E.T.A. was presented in 2020 in the programme Podium der Jungen (Podium of the Young) broadcast by NDR, and 2022 saw broadcasts of a production for ARD Klassik with trios by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartoldy and Dmitri Shostakovich and of several live concert recordings on SWR and BR. The trio is sponsored by the **German Academic Scholarship Foundation** and has received important musical guidance from Dirk Mommertz, Eberhard Feltz, Priya Mitchell and Niklas Schmidt.

Recently the Trio E.T.A. has been announced as **SWR2 New Talent 2023-2026**, which includes concerts, video- and audio productions for SWR broadcastings and SWR digital formats.

Elene Meipariani (violin), Till Schuler (violoncello) und Till Hoffmann (piano) began their forays into piano trio playing with Romantic music, Till Schuler says: "Johannes Brahms's first piano trio will always have a special place in our repertoire because it was the first piece we worked up together. He was an enthusiastic reader of E.T.A. Hoffmann's stories." And that is the kind of connection that the three musicians love. This multi-talented Romantic writer, who was also active as a jurist, composer, conductor, music critic and artist, thus became their ideal guiding figure – particularly because he regarded music as the highest form of art there is.

The trio devotes its attention not only to traditional masterpieces but also to rarities of the repertoire, such

as the piano trio by the composer Roman Pawollek (b. 1971) that will feature in its concert and CD schedule this season, and to new music, including a composition by Isabel Mundry that is currently being completed and will be dedicated to the ensemble.

In the coming months, the Trio E.T.A. can be experienced live throughout. They will be playing trio works from various epochs: Joseph Haydn from the Classical period, César Franck, Johannes Brahms and Sergei Rachmaninoff from the Romantic era, and modern composers such as Dmitri Shostakovich, Isang Yun and Roman Pawollek. "We have put together very different and interesting programmes with repertoire that is very close to our hearts and that we think is very worth discovering and hearing."

This stylistic spectrum ranging from Classicism and Romanticism to contemporary music is also featured on the trio's **debut CD**, with works from three centuries. It will be released on the Leipzig label **GENUIN** in **February 2023**.

The Trio in C Major Hob. XV:27 by **Joseph Haydn** is one of a set of three piano trios that the composer wrote during his second visit to England in 1795. It is dedicated to his friend Teresa Jansen, who was a celebrated piano virtuoso in England at the time. This is evident in the piece, as the piano part is much more technically brilliant than those of the other two instruments. The first movement is full of animated arpeggios and jaunty grace notes, while the cantabile Andante has something of a Scottish folk song. The brisk finale is a finely balanced movement that is witty, dance-like and virtuosic.

The Trio in G Minor, op. 15, by **Bedřich Smetana** is the composer's only work in this genre, very unlike Haydn, who probably wrote more than 40 piano trios. He wrote it in the years 1855/56. It is also in three movements. Its mood is dominated by his grief for his daughter Bedriska, who died in 1855. For Elene Meipariani, the piece begins "highly emotionally with a descending chromatic figure in the violin: a cry of pain that shocks us even today. But there is also a prospect of hope and a time beyond the grief." In the first movement, lamento motifs are contrasted with a second theme reminiscent of a children's song. The second movement, a scherzo-like Allegro, is a portrait of little Bedriska. It features a lively, dance-like theme that puts one in mind of a child playing, but this childlike joy is troubled by the grief-stricken motifs from the first movement. For this reason, the movement has also been described as Scherzo doloroso. Two trios round out this musical portrait, one gentle in character, the other solemn. The work ends with a wild and impetuous finale full of rhythmic subtleties. It is a veritable danse macabre, including a funeral march, that is not checked even by the lovely secondary subject on the cello.

The third piece on the album is the rarity by **Roman Pawollek**. He has composed altogether three piano trios; this one, which has not yet been published and still lacks a number, was his first. When listening to the piece, one can hear that he himself is a pianist and accordion player and that he has a big predilection for improvisation. The trio has two movements: a lively Presto Smanioso characterised by minimalistic patterns and motoric repetitions, and a Lento Misterioso, in which bell-like sounds from the depths of the piano interact with delicate harmonics from the strings.

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