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# SMETANA TRIO

Jana Vonášková, violin | Vlastimil Holec, violin | Josef Kluson, viola

Feb. 24, 2019 | 3:00 p.m. | Beall Concert Hall



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## PROGRAM for **SMETANA TRIO**

Trio *élégiaque* No. 1 in G minor (1892)

Sergei Rachmaninov  
(1873-1943)

Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor Op. 32 (1939)

Allegro moderato  
Scherzo. Allegro molto  
Elegia. Adagio  
Finale. Allegro non troppo

Anton Arensky  
(1861-1906)

### INTERVAL

Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 15 (1854-55)

Moderato assai - Più animato  
Allegro, ma non agitato  
Finale. Presto

Bedrich Smetana  
(1824-1884)

## ABOUT the **SMETANA TRIO**

The Smetana Trio, founded in 1934 by the legendary Czech pianist Josef Páleníček, violinist Alexandr Plocek and cellist František Smetana, is today's foremost Czech chamber ensemble. Currently comprised of Jitka Cechová (piano), Radim Kresta (violin), and Jan Páleníček (cello), the Smetana perpetuates the interpretational ideals created by its illustrious predecessors as well as other superlative 20<sup>th</sup>-century soloists active in chamber music. "There is nothing routine about the Smetana Trio's approach to this engaging repertoire. Every aspect of their interpretation is carefully considered without losing an ounce of spontaneity. Individual lines are remarkable for their focus and beauty, though the powerful sense of ensemble is never sacrificed to individual display." - *BBC Music Magazine*

Following a triumphant, multi-city North American tour in the 2017-2018 season, the Smetana Trio returns to the United States in spring 2019 with programs including piano trios by Rachmaninoff, Martinů, Dvořák, Novak, and Smetana. Highlights from this tour include performances at the University of Oregon, Friends of Chamber Music Vancouver, and Queen's University in Ontario. Overseas, the Trio embarks on several European tours



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2018-19  
CHAMBER  
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**TICKETS**  
\$50, \$45, \$35, \$25 reserved

Join us for this final concert of the 2018-19 Season  
in historic Beall Concert Hall.



**BORODIN QUARTET**  
March 17 | 3:00 p.m.

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# Trotter Visiting Professor

**Lawrence Dutton, viola**  
**Emerson String Quartet**

**March 3 | 4:30 p.m.** \_\_\_\_\_

**VIOLA MASTER CLASS**

Frohnmayr Music Building, Room 190, Free

**March 3 | 6:30 p.m.** \_\_\_\_\_

**CHAMBER MUSIC MASTER CLASS**

Frohnmayr Music Building, Room 190, Free

**March 4 | 2:00 p.m.** \_\_\_\_\_

**LECTURE**

Frohnmayr Music Building, Room TBA, Free

**March 4 | 7:30 p.m.**

**LAWRENCE DUTTON** in CONCERT

with Fritz Gearhart, violin; Steve Pologe, cello;  
Arnaud Ghillebaert, viola; and David Riley, piano

Beall Concert Hall

\$12 General, \$8 Students and Seniors

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with performances throughout the Czech Republic, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and the United Kingdom, where the Trio is presented by London's Wigmore Hall.

The Smetana Trio has toured extensively in both chamber ensemble and as orchestral soloists, working with conductors such as Jirí Belohlávek, Libor Pešek, John Axelrod, Michael Boder, Tomáš Hanus and Stanislav Vavřínek and orchestras such as the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra della Svizzera italiana Lugano, Orchestre National des Pays de la Loire, Prague Symphony Orchestra, Prague Philharmonic, Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice and Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra Olomouc. Festivals and concert series include Cambrai, Aix-en-Provence and Nice in France, and Munich, Würzburg and Tübingen in Germany. In 2015 the Smetana Trio toured South America with performances in Lima, Medellin, Rio de Janeiro as well as the Beethoven Triple Concerto with the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra.

With an impressive discography of nearly a dozen albums recorded exclusively for Supraphon since 2000, the group's recordings include an album featuring the complete piano

trios of Shostakovich and Ravel, and an all-Dvořák disc which received **BBC Music Magazine's** Chamber Award for 2007 and the French **Diapason d'Or**. Additional discs include works by Smetana, Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn and Schubert. In spring 2017, the Smetana Trio was voted to win the BBC Music Magazine Chamber Award for its recording of the complete trios by Bohuslav Martinů, released by Supraphon Records in March 2015. The acclaimed recording received such recognition as **BBC Music Magazine's** June 2016 Recording of the Month, **Sunday Times** Recording of the Week, **Diapason d'Or** award, and a review on **theArtsDesk.com** opining "this is the greatest chamber disc I've heard in ages, and I can't imagine a better introduction to Martinů's music."

*the smetana trio has recorded for supraphon and cube bohemia.*

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**Sergei Rachmaninov's *Trio élégiaque*** was written in three days in January of 1892 and premiered a week later with the 19-year-old composer as the pianist. This is the first of two piano trios to bear the elegiac title; the second, coming in 1893, came shortly after the death of Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky, a composer Rachmaninoff greatly admired. While the second trio is formally an elegy to the elder composer, Rachmaninov's first *Trio* owes much to Tchaikovsky's 1882 *Piano Trio in A Minor*. Both trios present an expanded form in which a theme is modified through twelve episodes or variations. Rachmaninoff's concluding funeral march also takes a nod from Tchaikovsky's trio, written in elegy to pianist Nicolai Rubenstein. The piano's opening theme, an increasingly pervasive rising motif of four notes, would have been instantly recognizable to Rachmaninov's student colleagues as a minor derivative of a similar theme found in Tchaikovsky's first piano concerto.

Described by Tchaikovsky as the "czar of cellists," Karl Davydov's reach as a performer, composer, and as head of the St Petersburg Conservatory was far and wide, including a profound influence on Anton Arensky, who dedicated his first Piano Trio in 1894 as a memorial to his mentor, who died in 1889. Davydov's renown as the founder of the Russian school of cello playing is evident in the prominent role of the instrument in Arensky's trio; the cello bears most of the principal themes, seeming at times to supplant the violin. Arensky, also clearly influenced by the tradition of commemorative or elegiac trios established by Tchaikovsky, completed his conservatory degree in St Petersburg in three years, and subsequently taught at the Moscow Conservatory where his students included Alexander Scriabin, Alexander Gretchaninov, and Sergei Rachmaninoff. The influence of the waltz pervades his oeuvre, heard in this quartet in the second scherzo movement.

We know many of Bedrich Smetana's compositions to be distinctly autobiographical, from the grandiose musical landscapes depicted in *Ma Vlast* to the string quartet *Z mého života* (*From My Life*). The prime inspiration for his *Piano Trio in G minor*, however, was an intensely personal tragedy. After losing two daughters within eight months, one to tuberculosis, the other to scarlet fever in

1855, Smetana penned and premiered this elegy with himself at the piano before the year was out. The composer's emotional anguish is on full display in sorrowful chromatic lines and dotted rhythms that reappear, sometimes greatly disguised, throughout the three movements. The second movement is especially surprising in its departure from the expected slow movement form into a polka-like allegro, where emotional grief gives way to a dedication to Bedriska, his favored eldest daughter. Though written in the midst of intense personal turmoil, the impression is more of a story of the grieving process. We know that the *Piano Trio* was re-worked two years after its premiere, causing one to wonder how different that original piece might have been.



Brad Schultz is a Ph.D. student in musicology at the University of Oregon, with an emphasis in Historical Performance Practice. He is also Director of Music at Eugene's Unitarian Universalist Church, Sub-Dean of the Eugene Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, and piano accompanist for the Eugene Concert Choir. Prior to arriving in Eugene, Brad served

on the music faculty at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, where he taught courses in music history, organ, and church music. He holds a Master of Sacred Music degree in organ performance from Emory University and Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, Georgia, and a bachelor's degree in tuba performance from Luther College.

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