

Carlisle Music Society St. Cuthbert's Church 16th March 2016

The Society's final concert of the season featured the Prague-based *Trio Martinů* (violin, cello and piano). Its current members have been together for 23 years, participating successfully in international competitions, undertaking world-wide tours, recording CDs and, most recently, giving master classes at the Birmingham Conservatory. Their programme consisted of three piano trios which particularly demonstrated their special qualities. If the *Archduke* is the best known of Beethoven's trios, the *Ghost* (*Op. 70 no. 1*) is an important contribution to the repertoire. The work is by no means straight-forward; the slow movement features a forlorn phrase, and an atmosphere of mystery in a haze of tremolos, conveyed convincingly by the players. The last movement contains two interesting improvisatory passages.

The Czech composer Bohuslav Martinů wrote much, although not all of the highest quality. But his best works, including his *Piano Trio No. 2*, are full of energy and imagination. The playing characterised this, and the last movement in particular was a tour-de-force, in which the players were in complete control.

One cannot underestimate the importance of Dvořák's contribution to Czech music, his chamber music being particularly fine. The first movements of his *Op. 65 Trio* are serious, with a moving second subject in the first movement played by the cello. The last movement reverts to a more relaxed style.

This was a fine concert; throughout the playing was of the highest quality.

Alan Fraser