

Beethoven

Piano Trios: in C minor, Op. 1/3;
in B flat, Op. 97 (Archduke)

Trio con Brio Copenhagen

Orchid Classics ORC100101 68:19 mins



Trio con Brio
Copenhagen
couple
Beethoven's
opening gambit
as a published

composer with the last work he played in public. Haydn, under whose aegis the young Beethoven wrote his first three piano trios, wasn't keen on the third because he didn't think audiences would understand it, and, early though it comes in the oeuvre, it does indeed possess the qualities of the composer's mature style, even including a prescient appearance of the Fifth Symphony's four-note 'fate' theme. In the 'Menuetto' the stark contrast between the piano's peremptory parade-ground smartness and the airborne lightness of the other instruments foreshadows the music which will come later.

In the *Allegro* of the 'Archduke' this strategy finds its full flowering, as the development opens with diaphanous staccato textures on all three instruments: here the Copenhagen trio, whose playing is excellent throughout, create a gorgeous effect; the juxtapositions of contrasting soundworlds in the *Scherzo* are brilliantly handled. In their hands the great theme of the *Andante* develops massive expressive power, while the finale has an engaging freshness. Altogether, a triumph for Beethoven and Trio con Brio Copenhagen.

Michael Church

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

RECORDING

★★★★★