

SMETANA Piano Trio in
G minor op.15 **TCHAIKOVSKY**

Piano Trio in A minor op.50

Trio con Brio Copenhagen

ORCHID ORC 100051

**Passion and panache in Danish
performances of Romantic piano trios**

Deluged with plaudits for its earlier recordings, this ensemble comes with a reputation to live up to – and doesn't disappoint. From the first note, the Trio con Brio exudes class. But what signals such a high level of playing from the outset?

Initially, in this very warm recording, one notices the blending. The textures are miraculously clear and the often thick piano writing in Tchaikovsky's Trio is adeptly handled to allow the strings to shine through. The violinist and cellist are sisters, and seem to have that unquantifiable sense of empathy that makes for absolutely unified bowing and gesture. Then there is a fine sense of structure, and nuance within phrases.

Colour and contrast are always important in the second-movement variations of the Tchaikovsky – particular highlights being the fifth variation, which boasts golden-hued lilting melodic conversation, and the fugue in the eighth, where the ensemble brings great clarity to the intricate contrapuntal dialogues.

Smetana's Trio is full of high-voltage drama and gesture, which

admirably suit the vernacular of this ensemble. Immediately we are off to a passionate start. But there are also wonderful moments of repose, for example where the cellist delivers a gloriously reflective melody. Likewise, the finale is both explosive and exquisitely intimate – aspects that this performance delivers with compelling panache.

JOANNE TALBOT