

STRAD OUT. 11

JOLIVET String Trio
MILHAUD String Trio
op.274, Sonatine à trois
op.221b **ROUSSEL** String
Trio in A minor op.58
FRANÇAIX String Trio
Berlin String Trio
CRYSTAL CLASSICS N 67 053

DESTINATION PARIS

MARTINŮ String Trios nos.1
& 2 **FRANÇAIX** String Trio
ENESCU Aubade in C major
Lendvai String Trio
STONE RECORDS 506019 2780079

**Contrasting approaches to
a rich seam of 20th-century
writing for string trio**



The Classical string trio formation of violin, viola and cello got off to a fine start with notable contributions from Haydn, Mozart, Boccherini, Beethoven and Schubert. Yet the basic ensemble lacked the bold, virtuoso projection that Romantic composers craved, and for nearly a hundred years the format fell virtually silent, with the notable exception of Dvořák's Terzetto, scored for two violins and viola. However, the genre made a healthy comeback during the last century and some of the finest examples are included on these two new releases.

The current line-up of the Berlin (formally Gaede) String Trio – Thomas Selditz, Felix Schwartz and Andreas Greger – was established in 2006. Their vibrato-driven, cantabile style imparts a reassuring, old-world charm to the Milhaud pieces and a compelling emotional poignancy to the darker recesses of Roussel's op.58. Jolivet – the most popular home-grown contemporary composer in France during the 1960s – is more eclectically experimental, and here I wondered whether the group's portamento flavouring was ideally suited to the music's cool intensity.

However, in Françaix's 1933 mini-masterpiece (memorably recorded by Heifetz and friends in the 1960s), they sound completely at home with the work's neo-Classical gesturing, enhanced by directionally detailed engineering.

By comparison, the Lendvai String Trio – Nadia Wijzenbeek, Ylvali Zilliacus and Marie Macleod – bring a Gallic sensuality and grace to Françaix's enchanting textural interplay, and their heartfelt, exquisitely phrased account of the magical Andante third movement will be going with me to that famous desert island. Martinů is not a composer who gives of himself very easily, yet by giving just a little extra time to his interweaving lines and structural interfaces, the gifted Lendvai players imbue his music with warmth and enchantment. They also provide invaluable rarities in the form of Martinů's relatively early (1923) String Trio, rediscovered only six years ago, and Enescu's delightful 1899 *Aubade*. The recording's engagingly natural perspectives create the uncanny impression of the players being there in the room with you.

JULIAN HAYLOCK