

The background of the entire image is a black and white photograph of a suspension bridge, likely the Bix Creek Suspension Bridge. The view is from a low angle looking up the length of the bridge, showing the intricate network of steel cables and the stone towers. An American flag is visible on a pole in the distance, centered between the towers.

CLARKE • IVES • BEACH
GOULD PIANO TRIO

Charles Ives, Amy Beach & Rebecca Clarke

Piano Trios

The Gould Piano Trio

Lucy Gould *violin*
Richard Lester *cello*
Benjamin Frith *piano*

About The Gould Piano Trio:

*'[...] what they produce, after playing for 20 years together,
is simply extraordinary.'*

The Washington Post

'[...] a ravishing performance by the Goulds.'

The Guardian

Amy Beach (1867–1944)

Piano Trio in A minor, Op. 150

- | | |
|---------------------|--------|
| 1. Allegro | [4:26] |
| 2. Lento espressivo | [5:34] |
| 3. Allegro con brio | [4:12] |

Charles Ives (1874–1954)

Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano

- | | |
|----------------------|---------|
| 4. Moderato | [4:35] |
| 5. TSIAJ | [5:51] |
| 6. Moderato con moto | [12:03] |

Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979)

Piano Trio

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| 7. Moderato ma appassionato | [9:21] |
| 8. Andante molto semplice | [6:35] |
| 9. Allegro vigoroso | [7:55] |

Total playing time	[60:37]
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Ives, Beach & Clarke: Piano Trios

Charles Ives, Piano Trio

At the outset of the twentieth Century, Charles Ives, born in Danbury, Connecticut in 1874, swam against the musical tide. His deeply progressive compositions found little sympathy with most of his colleagues, the musical establishment or the public. Arriving at a crossroads on finishing college, he accepted that his work wasn't in favour and a living was not to be made from composition. Deciding to abandon the career, he took a job with the Mutual Life Insurance Company, where he eventually trained men to become Life Insurance salesmen. His passion for composition would be pursued at weekends and evenings after work.

This wisdom proved very timely, since the business partnership with his friend, the more extrovert, Julian Myrick, proved eminently successful. Musical fame would come to fruition many years later, with the help of disciples such as pianist, John Kirkpatrick, who premiered Ives' 'Concord' Sonata in 1938, and only after his composing habit had been completely abandoned.

His early years showed him to be active, sporty and impressively virtuoso. When only

fourteen, he regarded playing his own organ piece, 'Variations on America', as being 'almost as much fun as playing baseball'. However, this belied some serious health issues that had to be addressed in adulthood. A series of heart attacks led to a compulsory slowing down, lovingly watched over by his wife, Harmony.

That Ives' only Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano is one of his major works is without question. It displays his familiar hallmarks – masses of quotations and misquotations from American folk culture, references to the jazz idiom, polyrhythms and polytonality, and a sense of his ever engrossing preoccupation with transcendentalist beliefs. A devotee of Emerson and Thoreau, he weaved their philosophies into his works. Like them, Ives dreamed of an ideal society, combining opposing political doctrines for the good of all, so long as democracy held its sway.

From his wife we learn that the Trio – probably begun as early as 1904, completed by 1911 but substantially revised in 1914 – portrays his student days at Yale. During his time there he was certainly happy, but blighted by his beloved father, George's early death in his freshman year, 1894. However, Ives made important attachments at this time; his sympathetic friend, the choirmaster, Dr John Cornelius Griggs, who invited him to

become church organist at Center Church, New Haven; and also his classmate, Dave Twichell, the brother of his future wife.

While at Yale though, one can sense Ives' musical frustration at the conservative status quo; 'If more ear stretching had gone on, if the ears and minds had been used more and harder, there might have been less "arrested development" among nice Yale graduates', he later remarked. He was to regard most of America's existing operatic and concert life as a total waste of time, preferring the life of a family man, while avoiding public events.

The first movement of the Piano Trio suggests philosophical discussion, being comprised of two conversational duet sections (the first without violin and piano right hand, and the second without cello and piano left hand) before a tutti of all three instruments with piano, both hands together, closing in C major, as if to secure agreement.

This relatively short movement nicely sets up the wild Scherzo that follows, with its fancy title, 'TSIAJ', standing for, 'This Scherzo is a joke'! Here all the fun of male comradeship is evoked, abounding in Yankee tunes and college fraternity songs, such as the march-like 'Delta Kappa Epsilon'

tune (DKE – motto, 'Friends from the heart forever'). Other titles interweaved in this 'Medley on the Campus Fence' include 'My old Kentucky Home', 'The Campbells are Coming' and 'There is a Fountain filled with Blood', among many more. Their disordered juxtaposition creates a frenzied montage teaming with high jinks and games, played in a festive, communal spirit.

A nocturnal refrain, heard twice, finally leads towards a mysterious piano cadenza, building up the tension, only to be dispelled jokingly with a polytonal tutti.

Ives' father, George, a bandmaster, had always encouraged musical experimentation, glorying in the cacophony of two bands playing different tunes at the same time, marching in the opposite direction! Ives imbibed these tastes and ran with them, but in later life his despondency was very acute when the public reacted negatively to his compositions, often walking out!

The trio's deeply expressive Finale is of a very different hue from the Scherzo. Here we sense Ives' stream of consciousness at work as one idea morphs into another, providing contrast but above all, narrative.

The piece's canonic build up, quoting his own previously rejected music written for

the 'Yale Glee Club', marks the central apex of the movement, allowing for a full repeat that second time around dissolves into Hastings' nostalgic, 'Rock of Ages', speaking volumes.

The relationship between past, present and future was always alive in Ives' work, as it was in his psyche. He spent most of his life renegading against the very conservative, Connecticut values that he so decently upheld in his day to day existence. His struggle for recognition was eventually gained but only after much humiliation and frustration.

Today we can appreciate his uniquely American voice and listen to his works in the context of all the 'modern' music that was to follow him.

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Amy Beach: Piano Trio, Op. 150

Amy Beach (1867–1944) was recognized in her lifetime as one of the most acclaimed American composers (both in the US and in Europe).

We might speculate that Beach turned to write her only Piano Trio (Op. 150) in order to have representation of every major genre;

in fact her last instrumental work would be her only woodwind quintet, Pastoral, Op. 151. Beach composed her Trio while at the MacDowell Colony in 1938. Instead of the expansiveness of her earlier works such as her Piano Quintet (Op. 67), steeped in the developmental processes of late nineteenth century models, here Beach has a distinctive concision.

The first movement begins with an atmospheric effect of the piano, supporting a taut melody in the strings. A central section unfurls to passion, with roiling accompaniment. The hushed effect returns, as the music disappears into mist.

Adrienne Fried Block has noted Beach's use of two Inuit folk songs in the Trio. The second movement (Lento Espressivo – Presto) begins with resonances of the middle of the first movement, in the intensity of its lyrical content. Here, however, Beach quotes one of her own songs, 'Allein' (Heine), Op. 35, No. 2. The middle section is an abrupt juxtaposition, as Beach employs the Inuit 'The Returning Hunter' in a buoyant and playful setting (drawn from her use in the piano suite Op. 64, No. 2). After briefly interweaving with 'The Returning Hunter', the 'Allein' melody is recalled. Playfully, a phrase of 'The Returning Hunter' ends the movement.

Movement three, 'Allegro con brio', draws from another Inuit melody, the 'Song of a Padlimio,' (as used in 'Arctic Night,' Op. 64, No. 1), and its buoyant, rollicking character resonates with the use of 'The Returning Hunter' in the previous movement. The work ends with a refreshing vigor, leaving the dreamy moodiness of the first movement far behind.

Rebecca Clarke: Piano Trio

Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979) was born and educated in England, but she had ties with the US through her American father, and her best-known works were written in periods of US residencies. Both her Viola Sonata (1919) and the Piano Trio (1921) were composed for competitions sponsored by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, as part of chamber music competitions in Pittsfield MA. In both cases, Clarke's works were runners-up. Perhaps because of the Trio's jarring tone (for instance the dissonance of the opening), she did not find a publisher for it until 1928 (the Viola Sonata was published only two years after its premiere). In the 1976 interview with radio journalist Robert Sherman (which triggered the rediscovery of her music) Clarke stated 'Actually, I rather like the Trio better than the Sonata!'

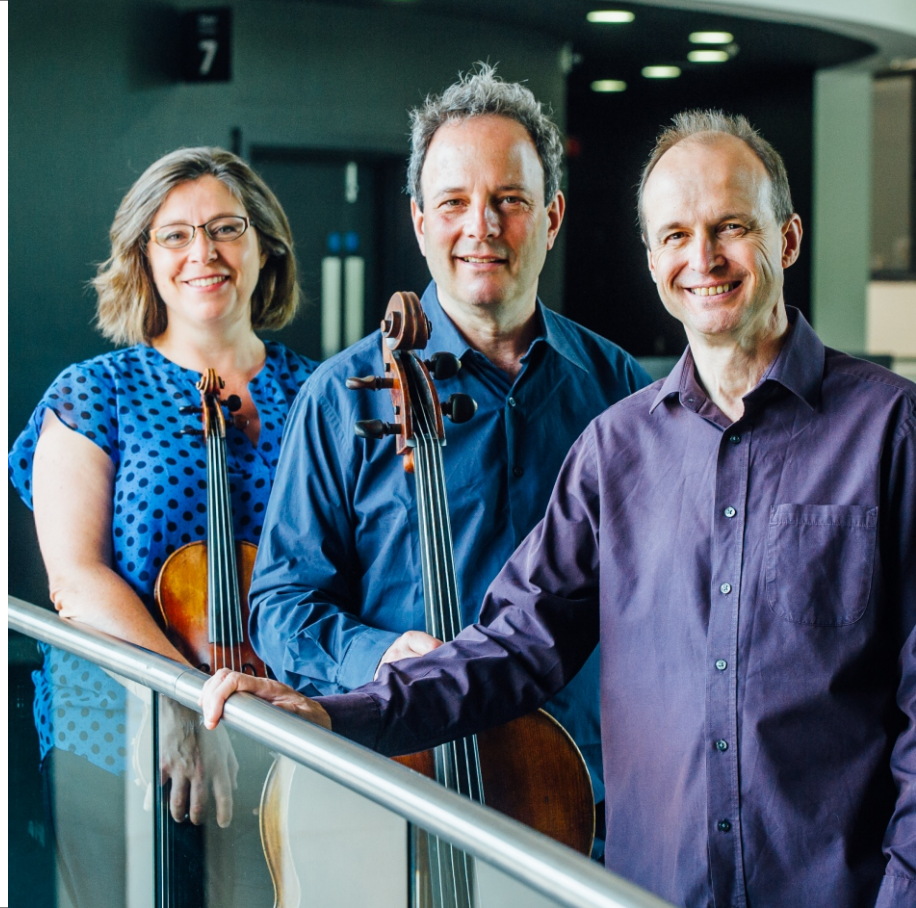
In its expansive scope and use of sonata

form, the Trio is similar to the Viola Sonata, but its dark tone is very different. Clarke's musical language is more cosmopolitan than other British composers, and Bloch and Bartók are possible influences. Clarke's Trio has been described as the finest work in the genre by any British composer. The harsh urgency of the opening motive – is its repeated-note stutter a haunting depiction of machine-gun fire? – immediately sets up a grim and tempestuous atmosphere. An obvious conclusion is that the Trio was Clarke's response to the devastation of The Great War.

The restrained ('molto semplice') start of the middle movement offers repose and contemplation, and then moves into an atmospheric sensuality. A refreshing pentatonic melody then emerges with luscious colors, building evocatively, before returning to hushed restraint.

The drive of the final movement (the piano opening is marked *martellato* – hammered) builds with ferocity, as fragments from the previous movements are recalled and re-envisioned. Finally, if not resolution, there is a sense of bold determination.

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Gould Piano Trio

The Gould Piano Trio, directly compared to the great Beaux Arts Trio for their 'musical fire' and 'dedication to the genre' in the *Washington Post*, have remained at the forefront of the international chamber music scene for a quarter of a century. Launched by their first prize at the Melbourne Chamber Music Competition, they were 'ECHO Rising Stars', making a highly successful debut at the Weill Recital Hall in New York's Carnegie Hall, and described by *The Strad* magazine as 'Pure Gould'.

Their many appearances at London's Wigmore Hall have included the complete piano trios of Dvorak, Mendelssohn and Schubert – plus in the 2017–18 season, a Beethoven cycle, to celebrate twenty-five years since their first appearance at this iconic venue.

Commissioning and performing new works is an important part of the trio's philosophy of staying creative and freshly inspired. Sir James MacMillan's second Piano Trio was written for them in 2014 and premiered at the Bath International Festival that season. 2017 featured the Goulds in the Hull 'City of Culture' celebration, performing former BBC Young Musician, Mark Simpson's *After Avedon*

as part of the PRS 'New Music Biennial'.

The annual Corbridge Chamber Music Festival, presented by the trio together with clarinetist Robert Plane, celebrated its twentieth anniversary with a commission from Huw Watkins – his *Four Fables*. It is scored for clarinet and piano trio, an instrumentation made famous by Messiaen in his *Quartet for the End of Time* which also forms part of their discography with Plane.

The Gould Trio's extensive tours of North America, the Far East, New Zealand, and Europe are interspersed with masterclasses to nurture the next generation, at institutions such as the Guildhall School in London, the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme at Snape and Dartington Summer School.

In addition to their highly praised recordings of the standard works, the trio have thrown light on neglected gems from the late romantic British repertoire with recordings for Naxos and Chandos, including C.V. Stanford's and John Ireland's piano trios, plus works by Bax, Milford, York Bowen and Cyril Scott. Just released is a recording entitled *Stolen Airs* of music by Northumbrian composer John Casken, including his piano trio and *Shadowed Pieces* for violin and piano.

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