

“Destination Paris”

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Gramophone

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Enescu Aubade Françaix String Trio

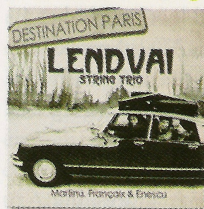
Martinů String Trios – No 1, H136; No 2, H238

Lendvai String Trio (Nadia Wijzenbeek *vn*

Ylvali Zilliacus *va* Marie Macleod *vc*)

Stone Records © 500192 780079 (56' • DDD)

String trios by three young men who went west during Paris's golden age



This mixed group of works for string trio were all written when the composers were living in Paris during that period in the 1920s and '30s when it was the centre of the music world. The first of the two Martinů trios (1923) was the very first work the Czech composer wrote on his arrival there. Amazingly, after the initial performances the score was lost: it was discovered in the Danish National Library as recently as 2005.

It opens strikingly with hints of neoclassicism, using playful *pizzicatos* leading finally to a gentle close. The central slow

movement is intense in its lyricism, leading to a ripe climax, here helped by the close recording. The violin then reaches stratospheric heights, leading into the jaunty finale, again with prominent *pizzicatos* and passages that come close to the Slavonic writing of Smetana in *The Bartered Bride*. One has to thank the Lendvai players for resurrecting the piece, to make the perfect coupling for the Second Trio of 1934.

Unlike the First, this consists simply of two substantial movements in sonata form, with the opening confidently aggressive in its spikiness and a lyrical second subject. During the central development section the violin weaves a sort of cadenza over a sustained chord, before relaxing into a final section in triple time. The second movement opens with a cello melody, followed by one on the viola in echo, before leading into the main *Allegro* in neat sonata form.

Françaix's Trio (1933) is quite different in tone, with its four very brief movements in pure neo-classical style, with the second a waltz-like *scherzo* with witty *pizzicatos* and the slow movement easily songful, before the jaunty finale with jolly oompah rhythms in the opening section and a slow middle section involving “smoochy” ideas.

Enescu's *Aubade* dates from much earlier, in 1899, a simple, attractive piece exploiting dotted rhythms in 6/8 time. The Lendvai players deserve credit for this excellent disc, though what a pity that so little information is given on these London-trained players, let alone an explanation of their unusual name.

Edward Greenfield