SCHUBERT
DVOŘÁK

Piano Quintet D. 667, “The Trout”
Piano Quartet No. 1, Op. 23

LAWO CLASSICS



Filipe Pinto-Ribeiro
Christian Poltéra

Esther Hoppe
Tiago Pinto-Ribeiro

Lars Anders Tomter
DSCH—Shostakovich Ensemble

Franz Schubert's earliest well–known instrumental piece is also one of the most celebrated piano quintets ever written. The Piano Quintet in A major—commonly known as 'The Trout'—is unusual in respect of its scoring, its material and its atmosphere. Each of those features speaks of Schubert's distinction as a composer while adumbrating the techniques and principles that made his musical output unlike anyone else's.

In the summer of 1819, Schubert made the first in a series of trips to the Austrian Alps. The 22–year–old composer had hardly left Vienna, and this new experience, in an area of upper Austria he described as 'indescribably beautiful', made a significant impression.

The composer's companion on his walking holiday was the singer Johann Michael Vogl, the foremost interpreter of Schubert's burgeoning catalogue of songs. Among the men's first ports of call was the Austrian town of Steyr, Vogl's birthplace. There, Schubert wrote of 'eight pretty young girls' who happened to have chosen the same lodge as the pair.

Steyr had another notable inhabitant, the wealthy amateur cellist and patron of the arts, Sylvester Paumgartner, who enjoyed organizing musical gatherings and soirées at private residences including his own. At the time of Schubert and Vogl's visit, Paumgartner was setting up a performance of the Quintet in D minor by Johann Nepomuk Hummel, a work distinguished by its unusual scoring for piano, violin, viola, cello and double bass.

Paumgartner saw an opportunity, and suggested Schubert write a new work matching Hummel's unusual scoring for performance at the same soirée. Paumgartner had an additional suggestion: that Schubert make use of a melody from his own song *Die Forelle* ('The Trout') written two years previously—a song known to many in Steyr, and which was in Vogl's repertoire.

Paumgartner's idea would have major consequences for Schubert's future output. Whether or not the composer had considered it before, the act of uprooting a song melody and replanting it in the soil of a purely instrumental piece clearly bolstered elements of the composer's existing thinking—the connection he felt, perhaps more than any other composer of the period, between lyrical song and forward–flowing instrumental discourse. Some of Schubert's most celebrated future works, including his string quartet No 14 of 1824, 'Death and the Maiden', would take this model forward explicitly. Many others would embody it in spirit.

Either way, the Trout Quintet certainly clarifies the maturing composer's ability to produce a stream of melodies that give the impression of being logically linked. In no other work by Schubert is such an abundance of apparently carefree melodic material woven together with such an atmosphere of conviviality.

That, surely, was connected to time, place and people. The visit to Steyr was filled with parties, outings and meals in addition to the informal performances organized by Paumgartner. It represented one of the happiest episodes in Schubert's life, the conviviality he felt with Vogl, Paumgarten, the musicians and the eight girls (who apparently also counted *Die Forelle* as a favourite) drawing music from him that seems conceived for in–the–moment enjoyment among friends more than 'performance' to strangers on a grand stage. For the musicologist Massimo Mila, Schubert's quintet enshrines 'the memory of a delightful summer, of carefree leisure days; the music bathed in sunshine and the spirit of youth.'

The first movement of the Trout Quintet embodies that sentiment, launching with a joyous flourish that bears some resemblance to the arpeggio which opens the second movement of Hummel's quintet. Thematic references to *Die Forelle* abound in every movement except the Scherzo third but are found most prominently in a piano part that frequently alludes to the rising sextuplet figure from the song's original accompaniment (itself a source for that opening flourish).

In the fourth movement, however, *Die Forelle* is front–and–centre. Here it is used as the basis for a set of five variations, the melody presented, dismantled and determinedly reconstructed, only finding its original inner peace after the valedictory cascade of Variation 5. Across all five variations the instrumental configuration laid down by Hummel serves Schubert well—the double bass steps in to provide the music's deep foundations in the bass, allowing the piano relative freedom to take flights of decorative fancy above.

Variation 4 is the most interesting from a narrative viewpoint. It references the original poem's depiction of the battle between the trout and the wily fisherman who sets out to catch it, muddying the clear river's waters to obscure his hook; the cello assumes the role of the fish, whose conceding of the battle is marked by lamenting figurations on the other instruments. One reason the song and its associated poem was beloved of the young girls (and presumably, boys) of Steyr was apparently for its allegorical reference to fair play in love and dating, a point underlined in particular by this episode in the poem. A final movement in the Hungarian style dispels any sense of injustice the story might have induced.

When Antonín Dvořák wrote the first of his piano quartets in 1875, he was more than a decade older than Schubert had been at the time of the Trout Quintet. Yet in a sense, the two works come from similar stages in their creator's journeys as composers. In 1871, Dvořák had left his position as a viola player in a Prague theatre orchestra to pursue a career writing music rather than playing it. In four years, he had built a modest reputation among Prague's inner musical circles—but was barely known outside them. At the beginning of 1875, Dvořák got the break he needed: he was awarded the Austrian State Prize—effectively a grant would take care of his living costs in order that he might focus on creativity.

The effect was immediate. In the months after receiving the prize, Dvořák produced a flurry of new scores including a grand opera (*Vanda*), a symphony (No 5) and a succession of chamber works. Among the latter was the D major piano quartet, completed within 18 days. The quartet suggests the composer was consolidating the style with which we associated him today; the music quickly throws up a direct, folk–like melody that could easily have come from the composer's 'American' period two decades later. The quartet constantly hints at Dvořák's gifts for lyricism, his distinctive colouristic touches, his sharp rhythmic profiling and his endearing Slavonic gestures.

As in Schubert's Trout, the exploration of a new instrumental configuration apparently drew Dvořák into new levels of ambition and fluency. The quartet produces melodies with generous frequency. Those melodies could be said to aspire to Schubert's own in length and breadth; the quartet's opening first movement can give the impression not so much of developing ideas as simply extending and augmenting them. Still, if Dvořák was about to step into new formal ground, he wasn't quite ready to abandon tradition. The D major piano quartet was the last in which he used a formal sonata form across all three movements, the third forming a hybrid of scherzo and finale.

In a further echo of Schubert's Trout, the first movement marked 'Allegro moderato' has been likened to a jaunt through the countryside. It ranges through varied themes, foreshadowing the composer's distinctive ability to oscillate between taut intensity and slackened lyricism. The second movement yet again salutes the Trout in its structure as a set of five variations on an introspective B minor theme, each stylised with instrumental and rhythmic devices—and the whole anticipating Dvořák's later exploration of the Bohemian Dumka tradition (in which passages of wistful melancholy and fiery exuberance are deliberately set against each other).

The final movement is that which would have alerted 1875 listeners to the originality in Dvořák's musical thinking – would, had the work not to wait until 1880 for its premiere, in Prague. It combines boldness of spirit and design, again moving from an understated cello melody to a scherzo-like development section using the cross-rhythms of a Czech 'furiant' (a folk dance in three-time) before introducing a second subject in common time whose passions constitute the work's culminating thoughts, thus forming a fitting finale.






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DSCH—Shostakovich Ensemble

Founded in 2006 by pianist and artistic director Filipe Pinto-Ribeiro, the DSCH—Shostakovich Ensemble has been regarded over the past two decades as one of the leading chamber music groups on the international scene. Based in Lisbon since its creation, DSCH is a flexible ensemble and a dynamic platform for artistic collaboration among outstanding musicians. The ensemble takes its name from the composer Dmitry Shostakovich, as a tribute to the centenary of his birth in 2006. In 2008, DSCH became ensemble-in-residence at the Centro Cultural de Belém in Lisbon and has since appeared in numerous prestigious concert series and festivals across several continents.

Its wide-ranging repertoire embraces music from different periods and aesthetic traditions, from Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven to Shostakovich and Sofia Gubaidulina—with whom the ensemble developed a particularly close artistic collaboration. Since 2006, numerous concerts by the ensemble have been recorded and broadcast by the Portuguese national classical radio station RTP Antena 2, as well as by the Franco-German cultural television channel Mezzo.

In 2018, the ensemble launched the DSCH —Shostakovich Ensemble Composition Prize, dedicated to celebrating the work of leading Portuguese composers.

The ensemble's critically acclaimed disc-ography includes the world premiere recording of the Complete Chamber Music for Piano and Strings by Dmitry Shostakovich (2016), as well as Beethoven's Piano Trios Op. 11 and Op. 38 (2021), released and distributed by Paraty / Harmonia Mundi.



FILIPE PINTO-RIBEIRO Piano

Filipe Pinto-Ribeiro is widely regarded as one of the most distinguished Portuguese artists of recent decades, internationally recognised as a soloist, chamber musician and artistic director. Born in Porto, he completed his advanced musical studies at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow, under the guidance of Lyudmila Roshchina, earning both a Master's and a doctoral degree. He has since performed in major concert seasons and festivals throughout Europe, the Americas, Asia and Oceania.

Renowned for his versatility, Pinto-Ribeiro performs a broad repertoire ranging from Baroque and Romanticism to contemporary music. Several composers from Portugal and abroad have dedicated works to him. As a soloist, he has performed with leading orchestras in Portugal and abroad, while his chamber music partnerships include many of today's foremost performers.

A major milestone in his artistic career was the founding of the DSCH-Shostakovich Ensemble in 2006, of which he remains the artistic director. Among other projects that he has been involved with, in 2015 he founded the festival and academy Verão Clássico in Lisbon, and has since 2021 been artistic director of Festival dos Capuchos in Almada and of Bragança ClassicFest. He has been Professor of piano at several Portuguese universities, regularly gives masterclasses in Portugal and abroad, and founded the Juventus Ensemble in 2022, bringing together internationally established artists and outstanding young talents.

In 2014 he was named a Steinway Artist by Steinway & Sons.



ESTHER HOPPE Violin

Swiss violinist Esther Hoppe maintains an international career as a soloist, chamber musician and pedagogue. She studied in Basel, Philadelphia, and London, and gained early international recognition after winning First Prize at the International Mozart Violin Competition in Salzburg in 2002. As a member of the Tecchler Trio from 2003 to 2011, she further distinguished herself with major awards, including First Prize at the ARD International Music Competition in Munich.

Hoppe has performed as a soloist with leading European orchestras and is widely regarded for her refined chamber music collaborations. She appears regularly with distinguished musicians and is a member of a trio with Ronald Brautigam and Christian Poltéra, with whom she performs across major European venues. A frequent guest at prominent international festivals such as the Gstaad Menuhin Festival, Lucerne Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, and Mozartwoche Salzburg, she is also recognised for her interpretations in both modern and historically informed performance contexts.

Her acclaimed recordings include Bach's *Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin* (Claves, 2022), alongside releases on several other distinguished labels. From the 2025/26 season, she serves as Artistic Director of Camerata Zürich, and since 2013 she has held a professorship at the University Mozarteum Salzburg. She performs on the 1722 "De Ahna" Stradivari violin.



LARS ANDERS TOMTER Viola

Lars Anders Tomter is widely regarded as one of today's leading viola players, described by *The Strad* as "The Giant of the Nordic Viola." Born in Hamar, Norway, he began studying the violin at the age of eight before turning to the viola. He received his early musical training in Oslo and later continued his studies with the distinguished teachers Max Rostal and Sándor Végh.

Tomter first gained international recognition in the mid–1980s, receiving a special prize at the International Viola Competition in Budapest for his interpretation of Bartók's Viola Concerto, followed by First Prize at the Maurice Vieux International Viola Competition in Lille. His international career developed rapidly thereafter, with his 1987/88 tour in the United States and Germany marking a significant breakthrough.

Since then, he has appeared as a soloist in major concert halls worldwide and has earned critical acclaim for both his performances and recordings, including a highly praised interpretation of Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante*. A dedicated advocate for contemporary music, Tomter has commissioned and premiered numerous works for the viola, notably Erkki-Sven Tüür's concerto *Illuminatio*.

In addition to his performing career, Lars Anders Tomter is Professor of Viola at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo. He plays a Gasparo da Salò viola (c. 1590)



CHRISTIAN POLTÉRA Cello

Christian Poltéra was born in Zurich and studied in Salzburg and Vienna with Heinrich Schiff.

As a soloist, he collaborates with many of the world's leading orchestras, under the direction of eminent conductors such as Bernard Haitink, Riccardo Chailly, Chri–stoph von Dohnányi, Andris Nelsons and Sir John Eliot Gardiner. Alongside his solo activity, Christian Poltéra is deeply devoted to chamber music and has collaborated with artists including Chris–tian Tetzlaff, Leif Ove Andsnes, Mitsuko Uchida and Ronald Brautigam, as well as with the Auryn, Zehetmair and Hagen string quartets. Together with Frank Peter Zimmermann and Antoine Tamestit, he is a founding member of the Trio Zimmer–mann, one of today's leading string trios, which performs regularly in Europe's most prestigious concert halls.

In 2004, Christian Poltéra received the Borletti–Buitoni Trust Award and was selected as a BBC New Generation Artist. He is a regular guest at major international festivals, and made his BBC Proms debut in 2007.

His extensive and internationally acclaimed discography includes cello con–certos by Dvořák, Dutilleux, Lutosławski, Walton, Hindemith and Barber as well as chamber music by Prokofiev, Brahms, Beethoven and Schubert.

Christian Poltéra is Professor of Cello at the Lucerne University. He plays an Antonio Casini cello built in 1675 and the famous 'Mara' Stradivari from 1711.



TIAGO PINTO–RIBEIRO Double bass

Born in Porto, Tiago Pinto-Ribeiro studied at the Escola Superior de Música e Artes do Espetáculo (ESMAE) in Portugal, before continuing his training at the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK), where he completed both an Artistic Diploma and a Master's degree in Double Bass.

Throughout his career he has received several international distinctions, including prizes at the International Double Bass Competition in Houston (USA), and was awarded First Prize at the Júlio Cardona International Competition in Portugal.

He has performed with many leading international orchestras, collaborating with conductors including Claudio Abbado, Christoph von Dohnányi, Kent Nagano, and Christoph Eschenbach. An active chamber musician, Tiago Pinto–Ribeiro is a member of the DSCH—Shostakovich Ensemble and performs regularly with the ensemble in Portugal and throughout Europe.

He is Professor of Double Bass and Chamber Music at the University of Aveiro, Portugal. Many of his students have gone on to win prizes at prestigious competitions and to pursue professional careers in leading orchestras.

Since 2003, Tiago Pinto–Ribeiro has been a member of the Porto Symphony Orchestra Casa da Música.



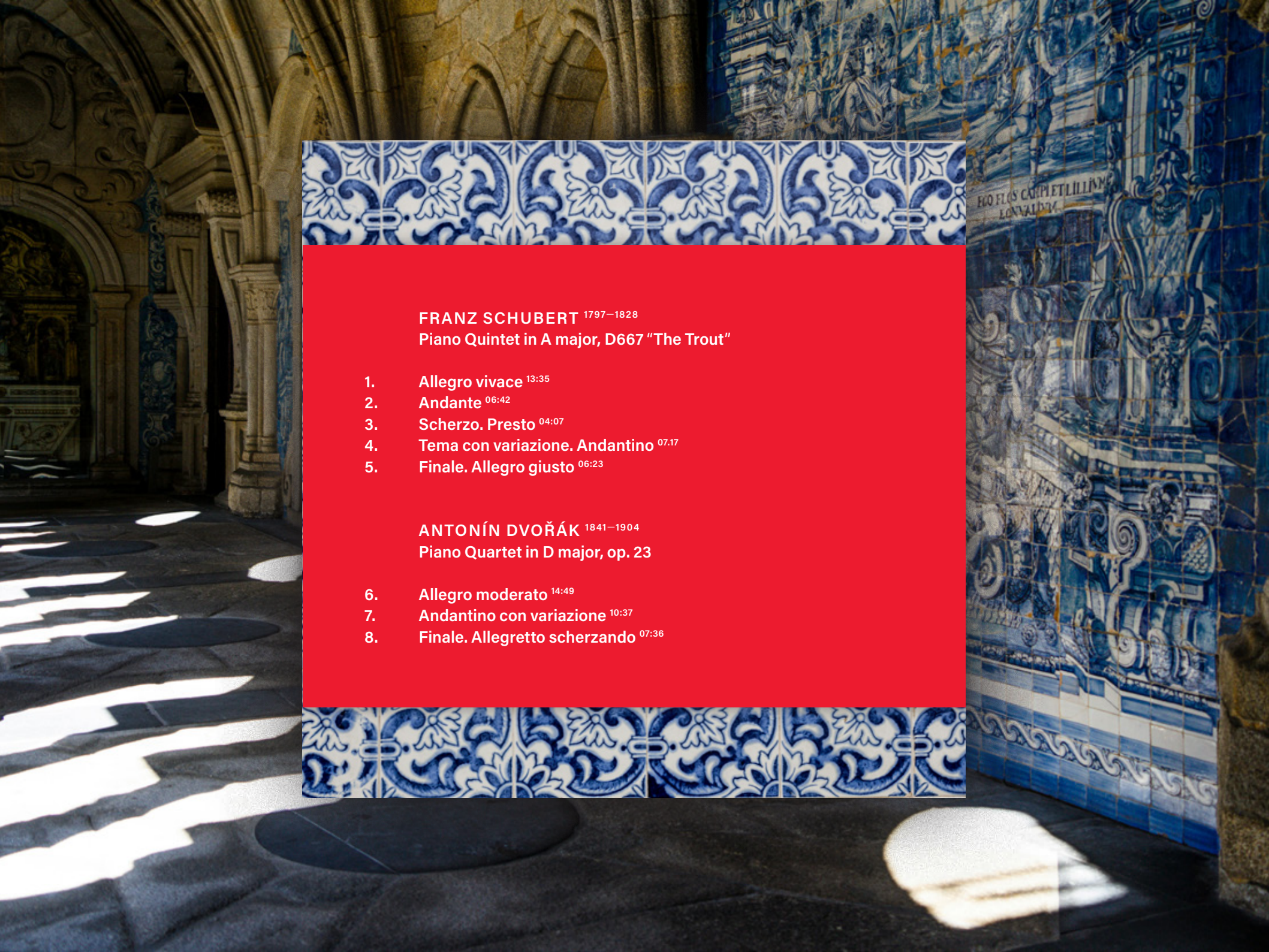


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ARTIST PHOTO (FILIPE PINTO-RIBEIRO): RITA CARMO
ARTIST PHOTO (ESTHER HOPPE): NEDA NAVAEE
ARTIST PHOTO (LARS ANDERS TOMTER): NIKOLAJ LUND
ARTIST PHOTO (CHRISTIAN POLTÉRA): IRÈNE ZANDEL
ARTIST PHOTO (TIAGO PINTO-RIBEIRO): RITA CARMO

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FRANZ SCHUBERT 1797–1828
Piano Quintet in A major, D667 "The Trout"

1. Allegro vivace 13:35
2. Andante 06:42
3. Scherzo. Presto 04:07
4. Tema con variazione. Andantino 07.17
5. Finale. Allegro giusto 06:23

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK 1841–1904
Piano Quartet in D major, op. 23

6. Allegro moderato 14:49
7. Andantino con variazione 10:37
8. Finale. Allegretto scherzando 07:36