
Leonore Piano Trio

Selected Reviews

Presteigne Festival Presteigne, August 2022

'I caught two world premieres on the penultimate evening of the Festival at St Andrew's Church where the Leonore Piano Trio gave the premieres of Huw Watkins' Piano Trio No. 2 and Ninfea Cruttwell-Reade's work for violin and piano *Bewegt*. The latter – taking its title from the German musical term for animated – took the form of a series of 'electrical' shocks, rhythmically punchy and dance-like, its brief span holding the ear as much for its startling animation as for its vigorous performance by violinist Benjamin Nabarro and pianist Tim Horton. Earlier, Watkins' Piano Trio had made an arresting concert opener, with four skilfully linked movements that traversed an absorbing emotional journey within a romantic sensibility, and where no material was wasted or overworked. A wonderful piece that should be taken up by other chamber musicians. In between, Gemma Rosefield gave a rapt performance of Joseph Phibbs' multi-movement Cello Sonata (2021), teasing out its serenity and trauma with beguiling tone. However, the evening was crowned by an immaculately balanced account of Ravel's Piano Trio, marked by an expressive range that variously confided and sparkled, its tender pianissimos making you hold your breath. Intelligent playing such as this was nowhere better demonstrated than in this revelatory performance.'

David Truslove, *Wales Arts Review*

Bargiel: Piano Trios Nos. 1 & 2 Hyperion; released 1st April 2022

'The Leonore Trio is an outstanding ensemble, whose previous releases for Hyperion have all been enthusiastically received...pianist Tim Horton, violinist Benjamin Nabarro and cellist Gemma Rosefield balance Bargiel's middle-register-dominated textures with such exquisite sensitivity and timing there is never any hint of overbalancing. This is music that by its very nature requires gentle coaxing and affectionate warmth to sound its best, and the Leonore responds with playing that possesses a radiant inner glow. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine this music played more captivatingly, captured in beguilingly natural sound by Andrew Keener and David Hinitt.'

Julian Haylock, *BBC Music Magazine* - performance *** recording *******

'The greater pleasure of this recording is the playing of the Leonore Trio...Gemma Rosefield's soaring cello in the second movement of Trio No. 2 is a delight, violinist Benjamin Nabarro's violin is forthright and impassioned, while Tim Horton, who certainly has his work cut out, pushes the narrative forwards with dexterity and not a little stamina. But it is the way these three talented musicians blend together that merits the largest bouquet. More please! The piano trio being such a popular medium in the 19th century, there is yet a huge forgotten repertoire waiting to be explored.'

Jeremy Nicholas, *Gramophone*

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‘Two bafflingly neglected piano trios in gloriously vibrant performances. If you’ve ever wished there was more chamber music to discover by Brahms and Robert Schumann, this is a real treat.’

Erica Jeal, *The Guardian*

‘In his First Trio the Leonore players bring out the mystery of the Adagio introduction and move into the surging and restless Allegro energico with vibrant tone and close attention to Bargiel's many accents, triumphantly punching out the dotted rhythms... graceful, urbane playing and flowing lyricism...There is turbulence in the opening of the E flat major Trio, to which the Leonore Trio responds with almost exaggerated phrase-shaping, the whole first movement unfolding with a grand, urgent sweep.’

Tim Homfray, *The Strad*

‘Delightful and diverting listening...Whether noble, sparkling or deeply expressive, Bargiel has the means and methods to sustain his engaging creativity that withstands scrutiny and repetition, and here enjoys the services of the interactive Leonore Piano Trio, for Tim Horton (piano), Benjamin Nabarro (violin) & Gemma Rosefield relish the music’s tunefulness and emotions and make a great team...This Andrew Keener-produced, David Hinitt-engineered and Peter Avis-annotated release is a winner: music we may not be familiar with but can be damn glad to now have the opportunity to enjoy it, on Hyperion.’

ColinsColumn.com

‘Hyperion’s Leonore Trio raises the bar regarding forceful accents, emotional urgency, and dynamic contrast, especially in their faster, gruffer Scherzo movements.’

Jed Distler, *Classics Today*

‘I called Bargiel’s F-Major Piano Trio spellbinding and haunting in its harmonically eccentric way...A sizzling fugue embedded within a cyclic-formwork caps the finale. If I could have rated this one a 10, I would have.’

Jerry Dubins, *Fanfare*

Litolff: Piano Trios Nos. 1 & 2

Hyperion; released 31st January 2020

‘If you ever need persuading to explore the lesser-known byways of the chamber repertoire, let this album do so: engaging music, played with striking advocacy from the outset, and beautifully recorded...The Leonore Trio have made something of a habit of exploring the byways of the trio repertoire but none is moer worthwhile than this disc...Throughout the Leonore combine finesse with a palpable sense of enjoyment that is entirely engaging... [The second Trio's finale is] of lightning-quick energy, demanding the quickest of reflexes, an ear for accentuation and tremendous dexterity, all of which the Leonore deliver in spades. Add to this the simple charm of the Serenade, beguilingly played by Benjamin Nabarro, and you have a winner.’

Harriet Smith, *Gramophone*, *Editor's Choice*

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‘Excitable, high-octane brilliance...The Leonore Piano Trio haul these dazzling delights back into the daylight with suitably virtuosic verve.’

Stephen Pritchard, *The Guardian*

‘Litolff's two piano trios are worthy of revival...Both works abound with exuberance and energy, [and] the cascading runs in the Prestissimo's rollicking finale demand the utmost agility and flexibility from performers... The group's marvelously dovetailed interplay and crackling ensemble precision leave me breathless. Collectors drawn to the chamber repertoire's neglected corners should snap up this thoroughly enchanting, smartly annotated, and wonderfully engineered release.’

Jed Distler, *Classics Today*

‘Curious listeners have reason to be thankful to labels such as Hyperion who dare to be different, especially when the music unearthed projects the unanticipated levels of quality and craftsmanship that are on display here...The joie-de-vivre of the Leonore Trio's playing is wholly captivating and plain to hear throughout this disc, and it's all the more enjoyable for Hyperion's open, generous sound...Litolff has fashioned a perfectly proportioned, imaginatively melodic vehicle for a virtuosic, dynamic group and the Leonore Piano Trio do not disappoint. Both these big-hearted works benefit from their brilliant individual and collective contributions, while the heart-on-sleeve joyfulness in their playing bursts out of the speakers.’

Richard Hanlon, *Music-Web International*

Music at Paxton

Paxton Estate, July 2019

‘The Leonore Trio created a gorgeous sense of unity in Mozart's B-flat trio, the liquid cello line perfectly balancing the sparkling piano, with the violin singing at the top. Their Brahms had a gorgeous, autumnal quality, and if their Haydn was austere then the understated nobility that they brought to Beethoven's Archduke trio was superb, especially the sensationally beautiful set of variations.’

Simon Thompson, *The Times* ****

‘Brahms's Piano Trio No 1 featured exquisite playing from Gemma Rosefield. There was perfect communication with her partners in the group in the ebb and flow of pace and dynamics in the opening movements, with much from her, and she eventually had the main melody in the powerful Adagio as well. It is the heart of the work, to which the trio brought a profound intensity, before Rosefield's cello moved the narrative on again into the choppy waters of the deliberately ambivalent finale.’

Keith Bruce, *The Herald Scotland* *****

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Parry: Piano Trio No. 2 & Piano Quartet
Hyperion; released July 2019

'The Leonores sound like they've lived with and loved these pieces for years: they surf the ebb and flow of Parry's surging, often tempestuous lyricism with the same grace and style that they bring to the radiant sunset codas that close the first movements of each work ... even had there been a century-long tradition of recording Parry's chamber music, I suspect this would still shoot straight to the top of the heap. Lovers of English music needn't hesitate.'

Richard Bratby, *Gramophone*

'Every bit as good and rewarding as the first...The expansive opening movement (from Maestoso to Allegro con fuoco) drips with rich expression and deep feelings, driven by an undercurrent of raw emotion, and also with tender withdrawals to an inner sanctum.'

Colin Anderson, *Classical Source* *****

'A good piece [the Piano Quartet] to play to anyone who accuses Parry of being second-rate Brahms, especially in this urgently propelled performance from the Leonore Piano Trio with viola player Rachel Roberts ... I've enjoyed the Leonore's Parry recordings this year a great deal; fine recordings, both of them.'

BBC Record Review

'Particularly moving in this sympathetic and eloquent account by the Leonore Piano Trio...this is an album to spend time with and relish as one's familiarity with this music grows in performances which capture the genial warmth as well as the seriousness of this great but gently spoken composer.'

Daniel Jaffe, *BBC Music Magazine - performance* *** , *recording* ******

'The Leonores are wise and generous interpreters...This makes a fine companion to their recording of the First and Third Trios.'

Jonathan Woolf, *MusicWeb International*

'This Piano Trio is a highly impressive composition and it's marvellously played by the Leonore Trio... I admired the Leonore Trio's first Parry CD very much and this follow-up release is just as good. Parry's music could not be in better hands.'

John Quinn, *MusicWeb International*

'The Leonore Piano Trio are joined by Rachel Roberts on the viola, and play with infectious zeal, injecting vim and vigour into the music...The finale provides a zestful tour-de-force for the ensemble, and these players certainly don't disappoint...Graced with a plush-sounding recording, the Leonore Piano Trio with Rachel Roberts offer incandescent readings which will win over many to these captivating scores.'

Stephen Greenbank, *MusicWeb International*

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'The playing, from the Leonore Piano Trio, is absolutely first-rate, and shows a complete empathy with the style, nowhere more so than in the charmingly idyllic Lento slow movement, an absolute joy to listen to...heartfelt, melodious music and attractive harmony, which is well-crafted and beautifully written.'

Phillip R Buttall, *MusicWeb International*

Nottingham Chamber Music Festival

Nottingham Theatre Royal, July 2019

'A glowingly passionate opening to Nottingham's Chamber Music Festival...the Leonore Trio used their virtuosity and insight to bring out the individuality in Parry's musical personality. Yes, there was plenty of Brahms, Mendelssohn and Schumann in the mix – but the Trio's handling of the opening movement's urgency as well as the effervescent scherzo, the expansively lyrical slow movement and quirkily exhilarating finale will have made those present scratch their heads and wonder why this music isn't better known.'

William Ruff, *Reviewsgate* *****

Leamington Music Festival

Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa; May 2019

'Super Saturday reached exalted heights with the welcome return of the Leonore Piano Trioplaying the Arensky Trio No. 1 in D minor Op. 32, unquestionably a masterpiece, at times a very elegant dialogue between instruments... Leonore continued the Schubert trail with a powerfully convincing delivery of Trio No. 1 in B flat D898, an exhausting, full-blooded venture; an astonishing performance happily exhausting many in the audience.'

Stratford Herald

Parry: Piano Trios Nos 1 & 3

Hyperion Records, released 1 February 2019

'An outstanding release... Hats off to the Leonore Piano Trio, which launches into the opening bars of the E minor Trio (no. 1) with a soaring potency and impassioned eloquence... Tim Horton makes the most of the swirling piano textures as violinist Benjamin Nabarro and cellist Gemma Rosefield thrillingly match their bowing intensity and fast/narrow vibratos, to create an extraordinary sense of music arriving hot off the press... [In the third trio] the Leonore players respond with a fervent spontaneity that grips the attention from first note to last.'

Julian Haylock, *The Strad*

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'You'll be purring with satisfaction at this exemplary new release from the Leonore Piano Trio...these performances feel fully matured – fresh, intelligent and strikingly stylish; edgy when they need to be and opening out generously when Parry's romantic impulse demands it.'

Richard Bratby, Gramophone

'The Leonore Trio give both works with ripe timbres and passion, meticulous in ensemble and intonation. They're equally convincing in the early Partita, for violin and piano.'

Stephen Pettitt, The Times

'There is a great deal to delight the listener... The Leonore Piano Trio's winsome performance of the scherzo has made me return with pleasure to this altogether attractive work... The Leonore Piano Trio play the work with affection, as does Benjamin Nabarro and Tim Horton the Partita in D Minor.'

Daniel Jaffe, BBC Music Magazine

'This is a richly rewarding disc which I enjoyed from start to finish. The playing of the members of the Leonore Piano Trio is expert and highly committed. This is very worthwhile music anyway but they make the best possible case for it. The recorded sound is excellent, as are Jeremy Dibble's notes. I believe that a recording of Parry's Second Piano Trio will be forthcoming from these artists in due course. I look forward to that very much.'

John Quinn, MusicWeb International

'Plenty of passion... emotional drive and sensitive asides vie with one another [in the E-minor Piano Trio], locked into a concise first-movement symphonic design, played with conviction and oneness by the Leonore members. There follows a very lively Molto vivace, air-filled with Mendelssohnian lightness, the Trio section and the Trio players generously expressive. The heart of the piece is an eloquent and intimate Adagio and the Finale (Allegro giocoso) skips along uninhibitedly.'

Colin Anderson, Classical Source *****

'Colour-conscious, energising and subtle playing of Benjamin Nabarro, Gemma Rosefield and Tim Horton.'

Jonathan Woolf, MusicWeb International

'These are charming works, given well-deserved - and well-crafted - performances here...Parry's Third Piano Trio forms the heart of the disc and in it we hear a sophisticated handling of the genre...a worthwhile and overdue recording.'

Angus McPherson, Limelight Magazine *****

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Ilkley Concert Club

King's Hall Ilkley, October 2018

'These players know each other inside out... Tim Horton managed the intricate piano lines with his usual lightness of touch with Benjamin Nabarro (violin) and Gemma Rosefield (cello) giving strong support, especially in the stormier passages of the third movement, which they took at a cracking pace... the players excelled in a magnificent rendition of Beethoven's Archduke trio.'

Chris Skidmore, *Ilkley Gazette*

Pixis: Piano Trios

Hyperion Records, released 29th December 2017

'They give an energetic account of the opening movement of the First Trio, which is infectious stuff – not just in terms of its catchy main theme but also the way it is decorated with delicious roudades on the piano. They enjoy the folkish elements of the second movement's main theme, which is adroitly developed by Pixis to charming effect. The piano once again leads the way in the introduction to the finale ... which lets rip in an effervescent Presto, with a chattering interplay between the strings, culminating in a prestissimo coda that demands from the pianist an easy brilliance which Tim Horton has in spades. ... The dashing Scherzo is a highlight, while the way Pixis has the strings sing their melody over rippling piano accompaniment gives the Trio a yearning quality. The jack-in-a-box finale springs into life, its 'Moorish' melody deliciously inauthentic, and again the Leonore give a spirited reading.'

Harriet Smith, *Gramophone*

'There is Beethoven-like power here with the piano taking a melodic lead... The members of the Leonore Piano Trio rightly concentrate on the inherent optimism for the quieter melodies are too innocent to be sentimentalised and the straightforwardness of the reading makes for an ideal approach... Tim Horton's considerable skill certainly enhances its value.'

Antony Hodgson, *Classical Source* *****

Taneyev & Rimsky-Korsakov: Piano Trios

Hyperion Records CD 68159, released February 2017

'The Leonore Piano Trio – Benjamin Nabarro (violin); Gemma Rosefield (cello) and Tim Horton (piano) are fine interpreters; Nabarro and Rosefield's duet in the penultimate movement [of the Taneyev] is noteworthy. [...] [For the Rimsky-Korsakov,] the Leonore Piano Trio evoke the rainbow colours and myriad shapes, moving quickly from dark and expansive (first movement) to slithers of iridescence (second movement). Horton brings an uneasy sense of trepidation to the third movement, foreshadowing the bittersweet piano solo in the finale. The balance of instruments is excellent throughout.'

Claire Jackson, *BBC Music Magazine* ****

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'Taneyev, more astute than Tchaikovsky was in finding a balance between the piano and the two string instruments, is also far more resourceful in tonal colouring, in contrapuntal knitting and pitting of parts and in the general sense of creative momentum and coherence. These are qualities that the Leonore harness to terrific effect [...]

Geoffrey Norris, *Gramophone*

'With the British Leonore Piano Trio, [the music] is all about naturalness and spontaneity, partly driven by the driving force of the expressive pianist Tim Horton. [...] The kaleidoscopic mood swings are particularly hard-hitting [...] Intense, and concentrated, [...] the technical finish is flawless.'

Aart van der Wal, *Opus Klassiek*

David Matthews Complete Piano Trios

Toccata Classics 0369, released January 2017

'The Leonore Piano Trio have clearly lived with this music; their playing is alert and stylish, unafraid to let the melodies soar. 'Their performances seem to me definitive', says Matthews.'

Richard Bratby, *Gramophone – Editor's Choice*

'Lyrical lines are played with a poignancy and delicacy by an ensemble who thoroughly believe in the music.'

Martin Cullingford, *Gramophone*

'David Matthews is doubly fortunate. [...] on this disc, he has the wonderful, technically impeccable and sensitive Leonore Piano Trio as his performers.'

Gary Higginson, *MusicWeb International*

Édouard Lalo Piano Trios

Hyperion Records CDA68113, released 31 December 2015

'[a] powerful performance by the Leonore Piano Trio. Their huge dynamic range is effortlessly accommodated by the recording.'

Andrew McGregor, BBC Radio 3 *Record Review – disc of the week*

'The suavity of playing is [a] key factor in lending all three trios the polish and panache that they merit.'

Geoffrey Norris, *Gramophone*

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'There's high virtuosity all round—superb light, dazzling backgrounds from Tim Horton, searing intensity of tone from violinist Benjamin Nabarro and cellist Gemma Rosefield [...] it's terrific stuff.'

Jessica Duchon, *BBC Music Magazine* – performance **, recording ******

'A remarkable disc of his piano trios by the Leonore, who make a good case of them [...] a real discovery.'

The Sunday Times

'These stunning performances from the Leonore Piano Trio are highly convincing, conveying magnificent spirit which brings out the joy and vivacity of these works. The players demonstrate an attentive ear for each other and play with impressive unity without losing any sense of individual character ... Leader Benjamin Nabarro is a splendid chamber player, leading the trio forward with energy and assurance, while cellist Gemma Rosefield and pianist Tim Horton provide highly responsive support ... this album from Leonore Piano Trio is even finer with engaging and beautifully played performances guaranteed to delight'

Michael Cookson, MusicWeb International

'The Leonore Piano Trio, with none other than Tim Horton on piano, delivers clean, light performances that respect the music's craft without trying to make of it more than is there.'

AllMusic, USA

'The Leonore Piano Trio has much to offer in regard to its meticulous observing of Lalo's wide-ranging dynamics ... on balance, this is the finest release with all three Lalo trios in the present and past catalogs'

ClassicsToday.com

Beethoven - Complete Piano Trios I and David Matthews's Piano Trio No.1

Kings Place, March 2015

"This was a fine performance, not least when the playing of the three musicians was so admirably dovetailed into the ensemble as a whole." -***Richard Whitehouse, Classical Source***

Presteigne Festival

23 August 2014

"The Leonore Trio's concert gave us the energetic and virtuosic drama of Blackwood-born Huw Watkins' Piano Trio (with the composer at the piano). But it was Mendelssohn's First Piano Trio, which ended the programme that burnt itself into the memory. Fleet, nimble, light as a soufflé yet also exploding into searing drama and passion, it was a performance in a thousand, bringing a roar of approval from the audience at the close" -

Wales Online *****

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Arensky's Piano Trios

Hyperion CDA68015, released 3 March 2014

“The Leonore Trio do much to persuade us to listen anew to Arensky – too often dismissed as a lightweight Tchaikovsky – playing with sumptuous breadth and beguiling warmth in the first trio, and with appropriate seriousness of intent in the altogether graver second. Revelatory playing from Benjamin Nabarro, violin, Gemma Rosefield, cello, and Tim Horton, piano.” -*The Observer* ****

“The Leonores play with truly glorious affection and security, and it is hard to imagine playing of a greater empathy. Balance (there is no artificial highlighting) and sound are ideal. - *Gramophone 'Choice'*

“The Leonore Piano Trio offer an all-Arensky adventure [...] Masterly performance, handsomely recorded, with a range of tone-colours from pianist Tim Horton and a specially lovely lead back into the main melody of the F minor's Romance from violinist Benjamin Nabarro.” - *BBC Music Magazine*****

“These works make an admirable CD and one must applaud the performances of the Leonore ensemble in both, for it manages to capture their subtly varied essence and style ideally. The musicians here manage to hold the underlying pulse of the first movement of the D minor together without making it appear stiff or unnatural, at the same time as applying those myriad touches of refinement and expression without appearing contrived. In other words, in this difficult long movement (14 minutes) the attention is fully held, and in the succeeding three movements their playing is equally admirable – especially in the elegiac Adagio, where in the closing passage Gemma Rosefield's cello tone is first-rate and in the finale displaying an admirable combination of varied emotional strengths and architectural expression. [...] The Leonore Trio manages to extract an underlying vein of passionate commitment that sheds fresh light on the familiar, endlessly melodic line. The result is indeed fine.” - *International Record Review 'Outstanding'*

Gallagher Academy of Performing Arts, New Zealand

14 November 2012

“The Royal Over-Seas League enables the best chamber music groups from universities to compete for a very substantial scholarship. This was the sixth consecutive year that the competition has been held at the Academy. It is tradition that some from the adjudicating panel perform at the opening concert; this year the judges performing were the Leonore Trio of Timothy Horton, Benjamin Nabarro and Gemma Rosefield. Haydn's Piano Trio No 27 was played with all the characteristics of classical style; elegance, clarity, crispness and a sense of elastic tempi as Horton sparkled his way through the virtuoso piano part, allowing the accompaniment to meld into the background. In Ravel's Piano Trio the ethereal hues and the reflective nuances captured the poignant moments. The Pantoum was exciting, while the Passacaille portrayed a bleaker terrain. The Finale was beautifully opulent with its warm lustres and full-bodied optimism. Holkham Beach by Simon Rowland-Jones was characterful as it traversed many moods which flowed almost seamlessly

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from one to the other; from the bleak to the scampering, from insecurity to fortitude and with a Presto full of energy and drama. Dvořák's Piano Trio Op.65 was powerful with an expansive lush sound where Nabarro and Rosefield created a lovely blend and balance with the tuneful grazioso. The warmth and delicate phrasing of the Poco Adagio with its long legato lines were tinged with melancholy. The varieties of colours, energy and drive in the Allegro con brio were finely paced so that it built layers to its final climax. A great programme, a marvelous performance, what music making is all about. Make time to hear the finalists and scholarship winners in their concert on Friday 16th. "

- **Andrew Buchanan-Smart** , *Waikato Times*