

TRIOMPHE 2

Fantastique



Joaquín Turina | Circulo

Dmitri Shostakovich | Piano Trio No.1 in C minor

Chen Yi | Tibetan Tunes

John Psathas | (NZ) Angelus (new NZTrio commission)

César Franck | Piano Trio No.1 in F sharp minor

Joaquín Turina (1882 -1949)

Circulo (1936)

I. Amanecer

II. Mediodía

III. Crepúsculo

Duration 11"

Following the cycle of the day, from dawn to dusk, this luminous piano trio is also Turina's last, written during his time as professor at the Royal Conservatory in Madrid. This was his alma mater, where he'd arrived at 14 from his home town of Seville, distinguishing himself as a pianist and budding opera composer before travelling the time-honoured route to Paris to study with that master-teacher, Vincent d'Indy. Manuel de Falla was already there. And the two Spaniards formed a bond - they married, they had children, they for all intents and purposes settled in Paris. It was the glory days of French Impressionism and Debussy himself praised Turina's light and shade, his picturesque quality, just like a fresco. But they were homesick. Albéniz was calling them home, urging them both to listen to the "more familiar voices" of Spain. So in 1914 when the war broke out that's what they did: back to Madrid, where Turina managed to assemble for himself a successful freelance career (teacher, composer, critic) - at the same time becoming an expert in the music of Andalucía, the land of light, his homeland.

Amanecer, dawn, opens on the cello in the slightly mysterious, ominous dark. Midday is the most overtly Spanish, with string pizzicato imitating a flamenco guitar. And dusk comes full circle as dawn in reverse, leading back into darkness and prophesying what was to come perhaps: the dark days of the Spanish Civil War.

Programme note by Charlotte Wilson 2025

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Piano Trio No.1 in C minor (1923)

Duration 13" 30'

Shostakovich's *E minor piano trio* is well-known, written just before the second world war. But there was a first, never published, never even publicly performed til the 1980s, long after his death. He was just sixteen, a middle child of three, unusual in that he had come to music late: his father was an engineer, his mother teaching him piano only since the age of nine. But he had already begun composing. His first piece, age 12, was a funeral march for victims of the Bolsheviks. Glazunov took an interest and eased his entry into the Petrograd conservatory in St Petersburg the following year. He enrolled in piano, composition, music history, and counterpoint and fugue: and by the time he wrote this had a small oeuvre beginning of piano pieces, miniatures for orchestra and songs.

This piano trio stands out. Passionate and romantic, in one single movement, the cello introduces the theme that underpins every aspect of it - now sweetly long and lyrical, now staccato and energetic, now passionately storming - and you can already recognise the signatures that would become the hallmark of his later style. He dedicated it to his girlfriend, Tatyana, explaining that the second subject had come from a discarded piano sonata three years before.

Programme note by Charlotte Wilson 2025

Chen Yi (China; B. 1953)

Tibetan Tunes (2007)

Du Mu

Dui Xie

Duration 11"

Trained as a violinist in the European classical tradition, Chen Yi initially came into contact with Chinese folk music in a forced relocation to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution. Already widely celebrated in China as a major new composer during the increasingly open cultural climate of the 1980s, Chen Yi moved to the United States in 1986 to continue her musical studies. She writes both intimate and large scale works for European and Chinese instruments, and fuses Western orchestral and choral idioms with traditional Eastern pentatonic tonalities. Her music has since been performed worldwide by orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic and Los Angeles Philharmonic, and by musicians such as Yehudi Menuhin and Yo-Yo Ma. She has residences in both New York and Missouri and, along with her composer husband, Zhou Long, she teaches at the University of Missouri–Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance.

Commissioned by the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition at Brigham Young University, the two-movement Tibetan Tunes was written for the New Pacific Trio and premiered at the Conservatory of Music at University of the Pacific in January 2007 in Stockton, California. The first movement is inspired by the Tibetan folk tune Du Mu, while the second movement Dui Xie is a kind of Tibetan folk ensemble music typically played with the plucked instrument Zhamunie, the bamboo flute, and the fiddle Erhu. Chen explains, *"The music presents the rich gestures of Du Mu (a name of a god in Tibetan Buddhism) in a serene mood."*

John Psathas (NZ)

Angelus (new NZTrio commission)

Duration 10"

Ioannis (John) Psathas was born in Wellington, New Zealand. His musical journey weaves through a myriad of genres, and has moved concert audiences in more than 50 countries on all 7 continents (even Antarctica). His music emerges from a dazzling 21st century backdrop, where dynamic collaboration with creative masters from all corners of the physical and artistic globe result in outcomes that are visionary, moving, and inspired.

Following three decades of creating works for traditional ensembles (particularly in the world of percussion) the nature of John's work has now shifted into a space of urgent social commentary, combining a range of live performance formats and technologies. Having collaborated in electronica, pop, classical, jazz, and multi-ethnic projects, he is now weaving these strands into new work that integrates virtuosic live performance with video, text, and cinematic soundscapes.

Originally from the duo "Halo" (commissioned by Ian and Agi Graham and written for Katherine Austin & James Tennant) this adaptation of "Angelus" was commissioned by NZTrio. About this work, John writes:

"Incorporating subtle and subliminal audio elements within the fiery trio playing, Angelus is an intense sonic journey with an energy that at times almost reaches a mania. Dissonant chords collide with bursts of frenzied melodicism, creating a climactic and exhilarating journey. This movement explores the extremes of musical expression, engaging the listener with powerful dynamics and intricate interplay between the piano and strings."

Written at the time of my mother's passing, this piece is about the memory of conflict between a child and their parent. This conflict is fuelled by strong emotions, and it is often of great surprise to us how our anger and conflict can be triggered by love within our closest relationships. The last idea in the left hand of the piano is a way of ending with a question, and also a representation of the infinite. It is also a dissolving of the physical (the live instrument sounds) into the incorporeal (the invisible audio halo). I love this ending – it is like music from beyond life."

César Franck (1822 -1890)

Piano Trio No.1 in F sharp minor (1841)

I. Andante con moto

II. Allegro molto

III. Allegro maestoso

Duration 35"

César Franck is announcing himself to the world with this, the first piece he considered good enough to publish, a trio on the grand scale. It was born out of some tumult. 18, in his final year at the Paris Conservatoire, he was already famous as a piano prodigy since his father had brought him and his brother from Liège as a 13-year old, wanting to turn him into the next Franz Liszt. And indeed, Liszt and Mendelssohn both came to hear them play. But it was to be his last year in Paris for a while, and they left under a cloud. It was all the father's fault. He had been antagonising people, over-aggressively promoting his sons, even launching into an outright feud with the critic of the *Gazette musicale*, and when the press turned against them (mocking even their very names: César-Auguste! So pretentious!), he dragged them back to Liège to see if they would do better there.

They didn't. The time back in Belgium was a flop, and young Franck ended up completely breaking with his father, walking out of home with only what he could carry and moving in with his fiancée. They never spoke again. But in the meantime, returning to Paris, he now had something to present - the three trios of his opus one.

This first begins almost inaudibly, flowing like a river towards an explosive climax. Then a powerful scherzo, becoming more fleet-of foot as it develops, leading into an explosion of a finale that circles back to the theme at the beginning – now splashed out in positively orchestral colour. Liszt championed this piece. He was on his way.

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