

# VECER

Maribor, 28 October 2009

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The Bamberg Trio is made up of first-class musicians who build primarily upon homogenous and balanced playing, while giving up not even a drop of their individual expressive power. Every detail, every phrase, fleeting glance or quick passionate gesture – everything was self-evident, natural, fluid, while the whole was clear and naturally structured. Their playing is truly intense. Three people were present the entire time since the weight of interpretive distinction lies with each member in a different place, yet their artistic potency was never in question at any moment. The pianist is a great artist with an imposing technique and a view on the whole. He knows when to take a subordinate role when necessary. The violinist's creative range is enormous, the beauty of his tone so wonderful that his playing really moved us in numerous places. The cellist showed, especially in the Saint-Saëns, that his tonal palette, as well as the refinement of his phrasing and articulation, do not lag behind that of the violinist.

George Onslow was a French composer of English birth who wrote under the influence of Viennese classicism. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century he enjoyed a considerable reputation and was admired and frequently performed, while later he disappeared into obscurity. This case involuntarily reminds one of the situation in the Baroque period, where we have to contend with the real flood of first-rate and technically excellent composers who have nevertheless not stepped across the threshold of artistry that guarantees immortality. The trio played here is attractively written and in many places very elegantly polished. From the standpoint of composition technique it is a true masterpiece, suitable even for text books. Yet only an excellent interpretation can revive it. The Bamberg Trio performed the work so consummately that the work became interesting to listen to and well worth hearing.

As soon as one compares Onslow with Beethoven, the Frenchman quickly pales. During the time Beethoven wrote the trio in B-flat, Op. 97, he was developing the compositional style in which the 'poetic' element, as he described it, came to complete fruition. This is a tonal idiom of exceptional intensity. He enriched all of the rhythmic, dynamic and sound material with calculated intermediate gradations so that he could express the most diverse thoughts and an entire range of emotions. The true Beethoven was everywhere in the lively and above all convincing performance: the entire structure was interwoven with clear, well-defined themes, while the expression was multifaceted and rich. It was chiselled out of the whole, as is characteristic of the composer's poetics: everything from the contemplation of gentle, lyrical sections to robust and glittering pathos.

Saint-Saëns was an extremely productive composer. He said of himself that he composes as an apple tree gives apples. He appointed the majority of his imposing knowledge in the service of average ideas. The trio on tonight's programme however convinced with its unusual quality, giving the musicians - with rich fantasy - plenty of chances to shine. The piece is distinguished by the clarity of a drawing, the logic of its thematic development, its economic use of compositional materials, special colouring and balanced form. It is noteworthy that the trio was initially conceived as a concerto for violin and cello - that is where the piece's virtuosic character originates, while the piano accompaniment exists on another level entirely. There was romantic poetry, energy, temperament and splendid tonal shaping in abundance; everyone played with enthusiasm, virtuosity and spontaneity.