



*Henja Semmler - Violin*  
*Antoaneta Emanuilova - Violoncello*  
*Jonathan Aner - Piano*

## To the Distant Benefactor

Claude Debussy:  
(1862-1918)

Trio in G-Major  
*Andantino con moto allegro*  
*Scherzo - Intermezzo: Moderato con allegro*  
*Andante espressivo*  
*Appassionato*

- Pause -

Pjotr Iljitsch Tchaikovsky:  
(1840-1893)

Trio Op. 50 in a-minor  
*Pezzo elegiaco*  
*Tema con Variationi*

If not for a single person, the music world in general and this of the piano trio in particular would have been much poorer.

And what a person! One who would pick the spouses of her children without attending their weddings. One who would terrorise its most loyal servants. Yet one who would invest all its might in making the world a more inspiring place. Baroness Nadezhda von Meck will be remembered as one of the most generous and progressive, yet enigmatic and disputable personalities in the history of the arts.

In 1877 she discovered the music of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. An appreciation soon turned into an addiction. She decided to bestow a fortune on the composer; such which would guarantee him a complete freedom and independence. The rapport between the two lasted for more than a decade and intensified with each and every of the 691 letters they exchanged. However, she posed one condition: She and Tchaikovsky were never to meet! Aware of her terrible reputation, she was terrified to disappoint the composer whom she idealised and idolised most. Or even worse- to negatively affect his creative powers!

However, Tchaikovsky saw in von Meck nothing other than a true friend. Dedicating her his 4th Symphony, he declared themselves as equals. It is therefore not surprising that it was that he composed his monumental piano trio, probably the largest work of the entire piano trio literature, upon her wish.

Von Meck's affection for the medium of a piano trio had grown earlier, as she hosted three musicians to entertain her summer evenings during a vacation in Florence. Among the three, an 18 year-old Frenchman, a brilliant pianist who could improvise, arrange and play everything at first sight. His name was Claude Debussy, and his services were hired for three years, until he was bold enough to ask for Von Meck's daughter's hand, which the mother vehemently refused! In the course of these three years, Debussy arranged Tchaikovsky's orchestral works for piano duo and played them with his patroness. He also composed his own piano trio during this time, a youthful work much influenced by Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saëns and Schumann. Nadezhda Filaretovna von Meck: To her the world owes the highlights of a grand master at the peak of his career, as well as the the first commissions of an aspiring artist who would soon gain a name at the great composers' pantheon.