

Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano

A. Khachaturian (1903-1978)

- I. Andante con dolore, con molto espressione
- II. Allegro
- III. Moderato

Khachaturian was born in Armenia but moved to Moscow in 1921 and stayed there till the end of his life. He is recognized as one of the great 20th-century Soviet composers alongside with Prokofiev and Shostakovich; all three were ironically condemned and accused by the Communist Party as "formalists". Written in 1932 as a student assignment at the Moscow Conservatory, this Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano is Khachaturian's only full-length chamber work. The trio is very original in nature without much influence from previous masters, as such combination of instruments is not regarded as "standard" and few composers have contributed to this genre. Stravinsky's Suite from L'histoire du Soldat (1919) and Bartok's Contrasts (1938) are among the best examples of such genre in addition to Khachaturian's.

The opening movement is a lyrical duet between the clarinet and violin over piano accompaniment, with florid embellishments in the manner of Armenian folk improvisation. The main theme was modified and reused later in his Violin Concerto (1940). The second movement is brief but eventful. Different episodes of varied tempi and complex rhythmical textures are sandwiched between 2 brisk sections that portray a lively folk dance. The final Moderato opens with a folk-like melody played by solo clarinet, which is repeated and transformed in the manner of variation set. The exciting Presto section produces a climax but the atmosphere then quiets down and brings the movement to a subdued ending.