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**BLOGCRITICS**  
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**The Merling Trio: Postcards in E, Dvorak and Shostakovich.**  
**MSR Classics, MS 1319**

[The Merling Trio](#) has previously released a number of critically acclaimed recordings. The trio are violinist Renata Artman Knific, cellist Bruce Uchimura, and pianist Susan Wiersma Uchimura. They are resident at the School of Music at Western Michigan University and have toured not only the US, but also Canada and Europe.

They open with Dvorak's "Piano Trio in E Minor, Op. 90 'Dumky'". The term 'Dumky' is a plural form of 'Dumka' which is a musical genre derived from Slavic folk traditions. Composed in 1891 Dvorak's piece is a series of six movements or 'Dumky'. In other words, thoughtful often melancholic sections interspersed with livelier, even turbulent music whilst never losing the prevailing atmosphere of sadness and lament.

The Merling Trio deliver a precise and yet fluent rendition of this ever shifting composition. A perfect example of this occurs during the first 'Dumky' when a lively polka emerges from the mournful opening. The trio carry us effortlessly through these rapidly changing emotions whilst elegantly capturing the romance behind each movement.

For the second part of the CD they have chosen to perform Dmitri Shostakovich's "Piano Trio No. 2 in E Minor, Op. 67". It was written between his 7th and 8th Symphonies during 1944 at the very height of World War Two.

The piece was a tribute to a close friend who had died in a Nazi concentration camp. This is apparent within its vibrant and emotive Jewish themes. The finale of the "Allegretto" is thought to represent the forthcoming liberation of the camps by Russian forces.

Even if you did not know the background to the composition it remains a strikingly moving, somewhat disturbing, and atmospheric piece. In amongst its four movements there are sections of light, playful, almost joyful music as perhaps the memory of a life itself is celebrated. The Merling Trio expertly draw this often overlooked element from the work and produce a compelling and moving recording as a result.

Herein lies the triumph behind their interpretation of this work. Quite often in other performances the more joyful memories have remained somewhat hidden within the cloying tragedy behind its inspiration. This is not so apparent on this recording and the result is a thought provoking rendition that builds towards a finale that shifts between the macabre and onwards towards feelings of hope and potential liberation.

Another excellent release and one that is highly recommended