

THE Strad

JANUARY 2005

REVIEWS CDS

Strad
Selection

Chamber disc **Beethoven** Piano
Trios no.5 in D major op.70 no.1
'Ghost' & no.6 in E flat major op.70 no.2
Peabody Trio
ARTEK AR-0018-2


Here is some of the most accomplished Beethoven trio playing that I have heard in many a year. The Peabody ensemble, which has been going for about 15 years, is clearly among the best trios on the scene.

Having listened to the 'Ghost' quite a few times recently, I began with the E flat major Trio. Via one of Judith Sherman's straightforwardly clear recordings, I immediately registered delightful touches from pianist Seth Knopp and noted how well violinist

Violaine Melançon and cellist Natasha Brofsky combine. The two string players both have distinctive tones but make a point of matching their phrasing where necessary. They also know when to get out of each other's way – this goes for the pianist too. In fact, although the playing bursts with personality, it is never selfish. These people have studied the music closely and they always put it first. Shaping and pacing of the individual movements are also exemplary in the E flat major Trio.

When it comes to the D major, the players go at the outer movements hammer-and-tongs but never overstep the mark, as at least one overpraised rival trio regularly does. The famous Largo is drawn out to 13 minutes but does not sound too slow, because the musicians have such a sure sense of the rhythmic pulse underlying it.

In short, I am moved, excited and gratified by the musicianship of the Peabody Trio. What a shame the booklet cover is so grim – these three paragons deserve the best. TULLY POTTER



Peabody Trio: exemplary
shaping and phrasing