

MUSIC REVIEW

Gliding From Decorous Chamber Into Ethnic Verve

By PAUL GRIFFITHS

The excellent Osiris Trio, visiting the Frick Collection on Wednesday evening as part of the current Dutch musical invasion, started their program with a piano trio by Haydn, No. 25 in G major, whose first two movements gave them opportunities to show graciousness and musical fitness — not least in how the violinist, Peter Brunt, and pianist, Ellen Corver, worked together, interlocking their tones in the opening gesture, for instance, to create a twist of edgy brilliance. (The cello here is a support instrument: Larissa Groeneveld's chances would come later.)

Then suddenly in the finale, the players followed the music out of doors, out from the decorous imaginary chamber of chamber music to a Gypsy party, hectic and wild, though with intonation and nuance from Mr. Brunt still excitingly precise. The concert started to breathe.

And on it went. Connections with ethnic music became a theme, continued in the slightly Oriental "Ackermusik," written for this group by the distinguished Dutch composer Theo Loevendie, in Frank Martin's Trio on Irish folk songs and, lastly, in Dvorak's "Dumky" Trio. Extending right through the concert, too, was the encouraging zest of the performers: their largeness in every musical

dimension of color, dynamic range and expression, and their consistently well balanced togetherness as an ensemble.

Mr. Loevendie's short piece was based on slow, graceful phrases for the two string instruments, with the piano most often chiming in to decorate. It was here that Ms. Groeneveld's sonorous tone and firm phrasing began to be felt, and she was impressive again sounding the lament theme in the central slow movement of the Martin trio, making its odd intervals right and forceful.

This trio was a relatively early piece of Martin's, composed in 1925, but thoroughly characteristic in its sobriety, even when dealing with

such irrepressible material as the jig themes of the finale. Indeed, the mix of sensitive restraint and unbuttoned vim — of pondering mind and tapping foot — gives the work a quite particular character. It should be played more often — if it could be played with the Osiris's breadth of spirit.

That same fullness made the "Dumky" Trio special. The music's constant veering between enjoyment of the present and reflective nostalgia was generously conveyed, and there was much to enjoy in the detail, whether in a sotto voce duet for the string instruments or in Ms. Corver's musical, characterful and sometimes humorous phrasing.