

LIMELIGHT

Music, Arts & Culture

Review

Moments of Vision (Avant Piano Trio)

Two satisfying solutions to the perennial problem of writing a piano trio

by [Steve Moffatt](#) on 1 March, 2021

Two British composers who shun being pigeon-holed take different approaches to the challenges of writing a piano trio on an excellent disc by the Italian-Slovenian Avant Piano Trio.



At 77 Robin Holloway is celebrated as an essayist and teacher, as well as the composer of a wide range of major works which started in the 1960s as complex and modernist before his controversial switch to Romanticism in the 1970s.

He documents his attempt on the piano trio format in this album's excellent liner notes. The result might be subtitled *Three Soloists in Search of a Trio*, for throughout the 11 interconnected movements – or episodes more accurately – piano, violin and cello only come together in the final section, a postlude which Holloway unashamedly imbues with a heavy dose of Palm Court kitsch.

Among Holloway's pupils was Peter Seabourne, whose brilliant early career came to a 12-year hiatus when he became dissatisfied with his work, only to resume "with a new voice" in 2001.

He tackles the problem head-on with a conventionally structured work which he likens to a "portrait of a piano trio playing", much as Diaghilev described Ravel's *La Valse* as a "portrait of a ballet". Both works are intellectually and musically satisfying and Avant – founded by pianist Alessandro Viale with fellow former Guildhall School students violinist Rebecca Raimondi and cellist Urska Horvat – are on top of their game.

This superb album is rounded out by Holloway's *Moments of Vision*, a song cycle for speaker, piano trio and percussion composed for Peter Pears at the end of his career.

