PHOTO BY ELLEN APPEL

TAKÁCS QUARTET

Thursday, October 5, 2017, at 7:30pm
Foellinger Great Hall

PROGRAM

TAKÁCS QUARTET
Edward Dusinberre, violin
Károly Schranz, violin
Geraldine Walther, viola
András Fejér, cello

Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

String Quartet in D Major, Op. 76, No. 5, "Largo"
Allegretto
Largo cantabile e mesto
Minuetto: Allegro; Trio
Finale: Presto

Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906-1975)

String Quartet No. 11 in F Minor, Op. 122
Introduction: Andantino
Scherzo: Allegretto
Recitative: Adagio
Etude: Allegro
Humoresque: Allegro
Elegy: Adagio
Finale: Moderato

20-minute intermission

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

String Quartet No. 3 in B-flat Major, Op. 67
Vivace
Andante
Agitato; Allegretto non troppo
Poco allegretto con variazioni; Doppio movimento

Takács Quartet appears by arrangement with Seldy Cramer Artists, and records for Hyperion and Decca/London Records.

The Takács Quartet is Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Colorado in Boulder and are Associate Artists at Wigmore Hall, London.

From soloists to quartets to chamber ensembles, the Classical Mix Series creates a varied blend of outstanding musical experiences. The 2017-18 series includes Takács Quartet (October 5), Jupiter String Quartet (November 30), Vienna Piano Trio (March 1), Van Cliburn International Piano Competition Gold Medalist: Yekwon Sunhoo (March 14), and Lawrence Brownlee, tenor (April 19). For more information about these events, please visit KrannertCenter.com/calendar.

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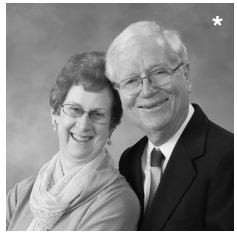

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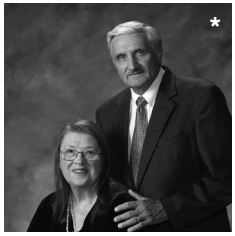

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PROGRAM NOTES

JOSEPH HAYDN
Born March 31, 1732, in Rohrau, Austria
Died May 31, 1809, in Rohrau, Austria
String Quartet in D Major, Op. 76, No. 5, "Largo"

Haydn's voluminous output alone does not explain his powerful musical and cultural influence. His 83 string quartets and some 45 piano trios, though daunting in number, are also overwhelming in their stylistic breadth and ingenuity. They move across the boundaries of the Baroque and the Classical, lick the edges of Romanticism, and even point the way to Modernism. If Haydn's paternity of the piano trio is sometimes overlooked, his fatherhood of the string quartet is honored universally.

The six "Erdödy Quartets" of *Op. 76* are so named after Count Joseph Erdödy, who asked Haydn for the set in 1796 shortly after his return to Vienna from his second visit to London. To the set, Haydn brought his mature understanding of the string quartet form as well as his enlightened emotional sense of music. The result of this was a new profundity reflected especially in his slow movements. At the same time, the fast movements were more powerful and technically challenging, and even the minuets took on a more serious nature.

The first movement, Allegretto, despite its gracious opening, has some serious underpinnings in its quick shifts to the minor at which Haydn is so adept. A development section gives new attention to the cello but not at the expense of the other instruments. Things heat up and then, typical of Haydn, he gives a surprise moment of silence before a return to the spirit of the gracious opening—but with variations and a brief but splendid cadenza for the first violin.

Interestingly, the second movement, Largo cantabile e mesto, is the longest of the four movements, understandably so because of its profoundly touching qualities. Here we have lyricism edged with sadness and a certain strength. This is not the "Happy Haydn" he is often misrepresented to be. He does, however, offer us a gentle conclusion to this pensive movement.

The third movement, Minuetto, with its elegant dance theme, offers a relief to the intensity of the Largo. A Trio section, however, goes well beyond the spirit of dancing with its complex counterpoint. If you must chain Haydn to the 18th century, it might be in this movement, but even then it is a tight squeeze.

The Finale, with its lively Presto, brings something of the happy spirit we often associate with Haydn. This happiness, however, carries a strong edge of the colorful Gypsy spirit that Haydn so famously caught in his work.

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
Born September 25, 1906, in Saint Petersburg, Russia
Died August 9, 1975, in Moscow, Russia
String Quartet No. 11 in F Minor, Op. 122

With more and more certainty, the 15 string quartets of Dmitri Shostakovich are seen as monuments of 20th-century literature and are ranked next to the six quartets of Béla Bartók. The quartets, however, differ so greatly from Shostakovich's symphonic output that one sometimes comes to them in a secondary fashion. Such adjectives as "mysterious," "fragmented," "death-haunted," and "confessional" have

been applied to them, sometimes with a hint of the pejorative. Much of this is explained by Shostakovich's working and surviving in a totalitarian state where it was necessary to cloud meaning. Behind that complex game, one finds, particularly in the string quartets, a tragic voice in mourning for the victims of tyranny. One also finds a composer determined to write his music under any circumstances.

Shostakovich's string quartets punctuate his tumultuous relationship with the Soviet regime. In 1936, Stalin had stormed out in protest from a performance of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk,* and this was followed by the famous review in which the opera was described as "muddle instead of music." *Pravda* wrote ominously that *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* "is a leftist bedlam instead of human music. The inspiring quality of good music is sacrificed in favor of petty-bourgeois clowning. This game may end badly." In 1948 the situation came to a head with Shostakovich and Prokofiev being accused of "formalist perversions and anti-democratic tendencies in music, alien to the Soviet people and its artistic tastes." Shostakovich was publicly apologetic but from that point on turned inward to chamber music and to the completion of his 15 quartets. Prior to the 1948 condemnation, however, he had already begun that monumental task with his first three string quartets of 1938, 1944, and 1946. The remaining 12 quartets would come between 1949 and 1974, the year before his death.

There is always danger of artistic compromise when politics toys with art. Particularly in his chamber music, Shostakovich solved the problem by retreating to the inner sanctum of his creative genius, which was more abstract and therefore more impervious to political controversy. As the Nazis did not comprehend the irony of the performance of Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* before 5,000 prisoners in 1941, so did the Stalinists miss the impact of Shostakovich's 15 string quartets.

Shostakovich wrote the *String Quartet No. 11* in 1966, the same year he had a serious heart attack. This was 13 years after the death of Stalin, when Shostakovich had been restored to public adulation with such prizes as the Royal Philharmonic Gold Medal, the Order of Lenin, and Hero of Socialist Labor, honors with which he was never quite comfortable. Failing health and universal concerns explain much of the elegiac quality of the work, but so does its dedication "To the Memory of Vasily Petrovich Shirinsky." A professor at the Moscow Conservatory, Shirinsky was also second violinist of the Beethoven String Quartet, which had performed so many of Shostakovich's string quartets.

Shostakovich abandons Classical form in the *String Quartet No. 11* for what might be considered a set of closely linked variations. The entire *Quartet* is based on the opening theme, stated by the first violin, which features repeated notes and a short-short-long rhythmic pattern that will reappear in each movement. The raucous Scherzo is followed by the solemn Recitative with its stately chorale. The Etude is Shostakovich's bow to minimalism with its repeated notes. The Humoresque continues the repetition, this time based on a cuckoo call, a reference to the old Russian superstition that the number of calls one hears represents the remaining years of life. The following Elegy is a culmination of the sad spirit of the whole work. The Finale is a summary of everything that came before.

JOHANNES BRAHMS
Born May 7, 1833, in Hamburg, Germany
Died April 3, 1897, in Vienna, Austria
String Quartet No. 3 in B-flat Major, Op. 67

Haydn wrote 83 string quartets, Mozart 23, Beethoven 16, and Brahms a mere three. Despite these statistics, Brahms took the form very seriously, and published the first two, *Op. 51*, after years of painful revision and what he admitted to be some 20 discarded quartets. He was 40 and at the height of his compositional powers before he finished them. If he struggled with the form, so did Mozart and Beethoven. (We make the chancy observation that it seemed to flow from Haydn with greater ease.) If Brahms was intimidated by the string quartet, it was because he heard the tramp of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven behind him.

Brahms' string quartets reveal him at his most Classical, innovative, and elusive. They are governed by his mastery of form, veiled though it may be by the Romantic spirit. One is once again reminded of Edvard Grieg's statement: "A landscape, torn by mists and clouds, in which I can see ruins of old churches as well as Greek temples—that is Brahms." To this we add Arnold Schoenberg's viewpoint in his famous essay "Brahms the Progressive." It was exactly such works as the string quartets that Schoenberg saw as essential to the development of his own 12-tone system.

Central to Brahms' string quartets is the concept of the "developing variation," best defined as multiple variations in form and tempo that grow seamlessly in and out of one another. Certainly Beethoven suggested the developing variation in his strong use of related thematic material, but it was Brahms who would perfect the device, which ultimately seems like no device at all but an integrating force in his best music.

Brahms' string quartets have not been without their critics. If Grieg saw them as "a landscape torn by mists and clouds," others unwilling to grapple with their elusiveness saw them as fog. But to this Max Reger responded, "The Brahms fog will survive. And I much prefer it to the white heat of Wagner and Strauss." For those who dare to play them and those who dare to listen, the string quartets are Brahms at his best.

Surprisingly, Brahms wrote *Op. 67*, the third and last of his published string quartets, in one summer (1875). Perhaps because Brahms' model in *Op. 67* was more Haydn than late Beethoven, the work sprang forth with unaccustomed ease. Then, too, it was a good summer for Brahms, spent in a bucolic spot near Heidelberg working also on his *Symphony No. 1*. Admittedly his favorite of the three quartets, the work was dedicated to physiologist and amateur musician Theodor Wilhelm Engelmann, husband of pianist Emma Brandes whom Brahms admired for what has been suggested were more than her musical virtues.

The first movement opens with a hunting horn call reminiscent of Haydn and Mozart—perhaps in jest since Brahms puts the accents on the third and sixth beats of a six-note phrase, rather than on the traditional first and fourth. A development section continues in the same humorous mood before a quiet passage leads to the happy final theme stated simultaneously in two different meters, a Brahmsian trademark.

In the second movement, the first violin sings lyrically before a sudden interruption suggesting darker things. Darkness passes and there is a return to the opening melody, this time with full accompaniment from the other instruments.

Despite its agitato marking, Brahms called the elusive third movement "the tenderest and most impassioned movement I have ever written." An unusual con sordino calls for the muting of the violins and cello while the viola sings. A middle section gives the melody to the muted instruments before the viola returns with a variation on the first melody. This movement is a fine example of the veiled genius of Brahms.

Nothing is veiled about the genius of the last movement with its theme and eight variations. In the first two variations, the viola, one of Brahms' favored instruments, elaborates on a simple theme. The first violin takes over in the third and fourth variation and the cello in the fifth. In the sixth variation, the viola and cello together play pizzicato while the other strings accompany. The seventh variation is a startling return to the hunting call of the first movement. The eighth variation harks back to the quiet transitional passage from the first movement. Structure again is honored in a brilliant coda that repeats themes from the first and fourth movements. Critics agree that this movement reveals Brahms' absolute mastery of form and is another fine example of what Arnold Schoenberg referred to as the "developing variation" in Brahms, an eclipse, one might say, of standard sonata form because of its notion that melodic (horizontal) and harmonic (vertical) material could be unified and that one musical idea evolves into another and continues to develop throughout the work rather than in an isolated "development section."

Like many of his other chamber works, *Op. 67* was performed for the first time in the home of Brahms' friend Theodor Billroth. The Joachim Quartet gave the first performance in Berlin on June 30, 1876.

PROFILES

The **TAKÁCS QUARTET**, now entering its 43rd season, is renowned for the vitality of its interpretations. *The New York Times* recently lauded the ensemble for "revealing the familiar as unfamiliar, making the most traditional of works feel radical once more," and the *Financial Times* described a recent concert at the Wigmore Hall: "Even in the most fiendish repertoire these players show no fear, injecting the music with a heady sense of freedom. At the same time, though, there is an uncompromising attention to detail: neither a note nor a bow-hair is out of place." Based in Boulder at the University of Colorado, the Takács Quartet performs 80 concerts a year worldwide.

In Europe during the 2017-2018 season, in addition to their four annual appearances as Associate Artists at London's Wigmore Hall, the ensemble returns to Copenhagen, Vienna, Luxembourg, Rotterdam, the Rheingau Festival, and the Edinburgh Festival. They perform twice at Carnegie Hall, presenting a new Carl Vine work commissioned for them by Musica Viva Australia, Carnegie Hall, and the Seattle Commissioning Club. In 2017, the ensemble joined the summer faculty at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara. They return to New Zealand and Australia, perform at Tanglewood with pianist Garrick Ohlsson, at the Aspen Festival, and in over 40 other concerts in prestigious North American venues. They will also tour with pianist Marc-Andre Hamelin. The latest Takács recording, to be released by Hyperion in September 2017, features Dvorák's viola quintet, *Opus 97* (with Lawrence Power) and *String Quartet, Opus 105*.

Last season, the Takács presented complete six-concert Beethoven quartet cycles in London's Wigmore Hall, at Princeton, the University of Michigan, and at the University of California at Berkeley. Complementing these cycles, Edward Dusinberre's book, *Beethoven for a Later Age: The Journey of a String Quartet,* was published in the United Kingdom by Faber and Faber and in North America by the University of Chicago Press. The book takes the reader inside the life of a string quartet, melding music history and memoir as it explores the circumstances surrounding the composition of Beethoven's quartets.

They became the first string quartet to win the Wigmore Hall Medal in May 2014. The Medal, inaugurated in 2007, recognizes major international artists who have a strong association with the Hall. Recipients so far include András Schiff, Thomas Quasthoff, Menachem Pressler, and Dame Felicity Lott. In 2012, Gramophone announced that the Takács was the only string quartet to be inducted into its first Hall of Fame, along with such legendary artists as Jascha Heifetz, Leonard Bernstein, and Dame Janet Baker. The ensemble also won the 2011 Award for Chamber Music and Song presented by the Royal Philharmonic Society in London.

The Takács Quartet performed Philip Roth's *Everyman* program with Meryl Streep at Princeton in 2014, and again with her at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto in 2015. The program was conceived in close collaboration with Philip Roth. The Quartet is known for such innovative programming. They first performed *Everyman* at Carnegie Hall in 2007 with Philip Seymour Hoffman. They have toured 14 cities with the poet Robert Pinsky, collaborate regularly with the Hungarian folk group Muzsikás, and in 2010 they collaborated with the Colorado

Shakespeare Festival and David Lawrence Morse on a drama project that explored the composition of Beethoven's last quartets.

The Takács Quartet records for Hyperion Records, and their releases for that label include string quartets by Haydn, Schubert, Janáček, Smetana, Debussy, and Britten, as well as piano quintets by César Franck and Shostakovich (with Marc-André Hamelin), and viola quintets by Brahms (with Lawrence Power). Future releases for Hyperion include the Dvořák disc with Lawrence Power, the Dohnányi piano quintets with Marc-André Hamelin, and piano quintets by Elgar and Amy Beach with Garrick Ohlsson. For their CDs on the Decca/London label, the Quartet has won three Gramophone Awards, a Grammy Award, three Japanese Record Academy Awards, Disc of the Year at the inaugural BBC Music Magazine Awards, and Ensemble Album of the Year at the Classical Brits.

The members of the Takács Quartet are Christoffersen Faculty Fellows at the University of Colorado-Boulder and play on instruments generously loaned to them by a family foundation. The Quartet has helped to develop a string program with a special emphasis on chamber music, where students work in a nurturing environment designed to help them develop their artistry. The Takács is a Visiting Quartet at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London.

The Takács Quartet was formed in 1975 at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest by Gabor Takács-Nagy, Károly Schranz, Gabor Ormai, and András Fejér, while all four were students. It first received international attention in 1977, winning First Prize and the Critics' Prize at the International String Quartet Competition in Evian, France. The Quartet also won the Gold Medal at the 1978 Portsmouth and Bordeaux Competitions and First Prizes at the Budapest International String Quartet Competition in 1978 and the Bratislava Competition in 1981. The Quartet made its North American debut tour in 1982. Violinist Edward Dusinberre joined the Quartet in 1993 and violist Roger Tapping in 1995. Violist Geraldine Walther replaced Mr. Tapping in 2005. In 2001 the Takács Quartet was awarded the Order of Merit of the Knight's Cross of the Republic of Hungary, and in March of 2011 each member of the Quartet was awarded the Order of Merit Commander's Cross by the President of the Republic of Hungary.

EDWARD DUSINBERRE (first violin) was born in 1968 in Leamington Spa, England, and has enjoyed playing the violin from a young age. His early experiences as concertmaster of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain encouraged him to choose music as a profession. He studied with the Ukrainian violinist Felix Andrievsky at the Royal College of Music in London and at the Juilliard School with Dorothy DeLay and Piotr Milewski. In 1990 he won the British Violin Recital Prize and gave his debut recital in London at the Purcell Room, South Bank Centre. Upon completion of his studies at Juilliard, Dusinberre auditioned for the Takács Quartet, which he joined in 1993.

In July 2010 Dusinberre released a recording of Beethoven's violin sonatas *Nos. 9* and *10* with pianist David Korevaar on the Decca label. Andrew Clements wrote in *The Guardian* newspaper, "Edward Dusinberre brings the same wonderfully subtle and intensely musical qualities to these two violin sonatas as he does to Beethoven's quartets."

Dusinberre enjoys writing about music. His book, *Beethoven For a Later Age: The Journey of a String Quartet*, was published by Faber in January 2016 and by the University of Chicago

Press in May 2016. The book takes the reader inside the life of a string quartet, melding music history and memoir as it explores the circumstances surrounding the composition of Beethoven's quartets and the Takács Quartet's experiences rehearsing and performing this music. He has written articles for the *Guardian*, *Financial Times*, and *Strad Magazine*.

Dusinberre lives in Boulder, Colorado with his wife, Beth, an archaeologist who teaches at the University of Colorado, and their son Sam. He enjoys hiking in the mountains near Boulder and going to the theatre.

KÁROLY SCHRANZ (second violin) was born in 1952 in Budapest, Hungary. His first musical experiences were listening to gypsy bands in restaurants, which he has always admired for their virtuosity and musicianship. Schranz began playing the violin at the age of four under the very strict supervision of his mother, who often resorted to unconventional methods of teaching and encouraging practice. ("To improve my bowing technique, she devised a method of attaching a string to my arm, and pulling in the desired direction. When this approach failed, she spanked me with a wooden spoon, which resulted in my hatred toward practicing.") At the age of 14, he entered the Béla Bártok Secondary Music School, where he met his future wife, also a violin student at the school. In 1980, he received his music diploma from the Franz Liszt Academy of Music where he studied with Mihály Szücs, András Mihály, and György Kurtág.

GERALDINE WALTHER, violist of the Takács String Quartet, was Principal Violist of the San Francisco Symphony for 29 years, having previously served as assistant principal of the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony, and the Miami Philharmonic.

A native of Florida, she first picked up the viola in a public school music program in Tampa. She went on to study at the Manhattan School of Music with Lillian Fuchs and at the Curtis Institute with Michael Tree of the Guarneri Quartet. In 1979 she won first prize at the William Primrose International Competition.

Among the many works Walther performed as soloist with the San Francisco Symphony are Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante*, Telemann's *Concerto in G Major*, Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*, Hindemith's *Trauermusik*, *Der Schwanendreher*, and *Kammermusik Nos. 5* and *6*, Tippett's *Triple Concerto*, Martinů's *Rhapsody-Concerto*, and the viola concertos of Walton, Piston, Henze, Musgrave, Bartók, Schnittke, and Penderecki. She performed the United States premieres of several important works with the Orchestra, including Takemitsu's *A String Around Autumn* in 1990, Lieberson's *Viola Concerto* in 1999, Holloway's *Viola Concerto*, and Benjamin's *Viola, Viola* (together with SFS Associate Principal Violist Yun Jie Liu), also in 1999. In May 2002 she was soloist in William Schuman's *Concerto on Old English Rounds* and the *Britten Double Concerto* for violin and viola.

In 1995 Walther was selected by Sir Georg Solti as a member of his Musicians of the World, an orchestra composed of leading musicians from around the globe, for concerts in Geneva to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. She has also served as principal violist with the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego and has performed as soloist with other Bay Area orchestras. She has participated in leading chamber music festivals, including Marlboro, Santa Fe, Tanglewood, Bridgehampton, Cape Cod, Amelia Island, the Telluride, Seattle, and Green Music Festivals, and Music@Menlo. She has collaborated with such artists as Isaac Stern, Pinchas Zukerman, and Jaime Laredo, and has

appeared as a guest artist with some of the world's most renowned string quartets, including the Tokyo, Vermeer, Guarneri, Lindsay, Cypress, and St. Lawrence quartets. She joined the Takács Quartet as a regular member in the fall of 2005.

In addition to her recordings for Hyperion with the Takács Quartet, Walther has released two MSR Classics recordings: Johannes Brahms' *Viola Sonatas* and the *Trio in A Minor* with pianist David Korevaar and cellist András Fejér, and Hindemith's *Viola Sonatas* with pianist David Korevaar. Other recordings include Hindemith's *Trauermusik* and *Der Schwanendreher* with the San Francisco Symphony (both on London/Decca), Paul Chihara's *Golden Slumbers* with the San Francisco Chamber Singers (Albany), and Lou Harrison's *Threnody* (New Albion), and as a member of the Volkert Trio, *Delectable Pieces* (Con Brio).

Walther is the mother of two grown daughters: Argenta, a soprano living in Los Angeles, and Julia, a ceramicist, in Washington, D.C. She lives in Longmont, Colorado, with her husband, Tom.

ANDRÁS FEJÉR (cello) was born in 1955 into a musical family. His father was a cellist and conductor, and his mother was a pianist. He began playing the cello at the age of seven, because as legend has it, his father was unwilling to listen to a violin-upstart practicing. Since an early age, his parents have held string quartet weekends—which, for the young cellist, were the most memorable of occasions, if not for the music, then for the glorious desserts his mother used to prepare for those sessions.

After attending a music high school, Fejér was admitted to the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in 1975, where he was a pupil of Ede Banda, András Mihály, Ferenc Rados, and György Kurtág. That same year, he founded the Takács String Quartet with three fellow classmates. Although the quartet has been his sole professional focus since then, he does perform as a soloist occasionally as well.

Fejér is married to a literature teacher. They have three children and live in the Rocky Mountains, where they enjoy year-round sunshine in beautiful Boulder, Colorado. When he is not on tour, he enjoys reading, photography, tennis, and hiking.