HANCHER AUDITORIUM

TAKÁCS QUARTET



Thursday, November 9, 2023 7:30 p.m. The Englert Theatre

Presented in collaboration with The Englert Theatre

Photo: Amanda Tipton





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THE TAKÁCS QUARTET

EDWARD DUSINBERRE, violin HARUMI RHODES, violin RICHARD O'NEILL, viola ANDRÁS FEJÉR, cello

Thursday, November 9, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.
The Englert Theatre
Part of Hancher Auditorium's 2023–2024 Season

PROGRAM

Joseph HAYDN String Quartet No. 63 in B-flat Major, op. 76,

no. 4 ("Sunrise"), Hob. III:78

Allegro con spirito

Adagio Menuetto

Finale

Béla BARTÓK String Quartet No. 2, op. 17, Sz. 67

Moderato

Allegro molto capriccioso

Lento

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN String Quartet No. 8 in E Minor, op. 59, no. 2,

("Razumovsky")

Allegro

Molto adagio Allegretto

Allegietto

Finale

The 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.

www.takacsquartet.com

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The world-renowned Takács Quartet is now entering its forty-ninth season.

Edward Dusinberre, Harumi Rhodes (violins), Richard O'Neill (viola), and András Fejér (cello) are excited about the 2023–2024 season that features varied projects including a new work written for them. Nokuthula Ngwenyama composed *Flow*, an exploration and celebration of the natural world. The work was commissioned by nine concert presenters throughout the U.S. July sees the release of a new recording of works by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and Dvořák for Hyperion Records, while later in the season the quartet will release works by Schubert including his final quartet in G major. In the spring of 2024 the ensemble will perform and record piano quintets by Price and Dvořák with long-time chamber music partner Marc-André Hamelin.

As associate artists at London's Wigmore Hall the Takács will perform four concerts featuring works by Hough, Price, Janáček, Schubert, and Beethoven. During the season the ensemble will play at other prestigious European venues including Berlin, Geneva, Linz, Innsbruck, Cambridge, and St. Andrews. The Takács will appear at the Adams Chamber Music Festival in New Zealand. The group's North American engagements include concerts in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington DC, Vancouver, Ann Arbor, Phoenix, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Portland, Cleveland, Santa Fe, and Stanford. The ensemble will perform two Bartók cycles at San Jose State University and Middlebury College and appear for the first time at the Virginia Arts Festival with pianist Olga Kern.

The members of the Takács Quartet are Christoffersen Fellows and artists-inresidence at the University of Colorado, Boulder. For the 23–24 season the quartet enter into a partnership with El Sistema Colorado, working closely with its chamber music education program in Denver. During the summer months the Takács join the faculty at the Music Academy of the West, running an intensive quartet seminar.

In 2021 the Takács won a Presto Music Recording of the Year Award for their recordings of string quartets by Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn, and a Gramophone Award with pianist Garrick Ohlsson for piano quintets by Amy Beach and Elgar. Other releases for Hyperion feature works 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 and Dvořák (with Lawrence Power). 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. Full details of all recordings can be found in the recordings section of the quartet's website.

The Takács Quartet is known for its innovative programming. In 2021–22 the ensemble partnered with bandoneon virtuoso Julien Labro to premiere new works by Clarice Assad and Bryce Dessner, commissioned by Music Accord. In 2014 the Takács performed a program inspired by Philip Roth's novel *Everyman* with Meryl Streep at Princeton, and again with her at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto in 2015. They first performed *Everyman* at Carnegie Hall in 2007 with Philip Seymour Hoffman. They have toured 14 cities with the poet Robert Pinsky, and played regularly with the Hungarian Folk group Muzsikás.

In 2014 the Takács became the first string quartet to be awarded the Wigmore Hall

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Medal. In 2012, Gramophone announced that the Takács was the first string quartet to be inducted into its Hall of Fame. The ensemble also won the 2011 Award for Chamber Music and Song presented by the Royal Philharmonic Society in 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. The group 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. Members of the Takács Quartet are the grateful beneficiaries of an instrument loan by the Drake Foundation. We are grateful to be Thomastik-Infeld Artists.

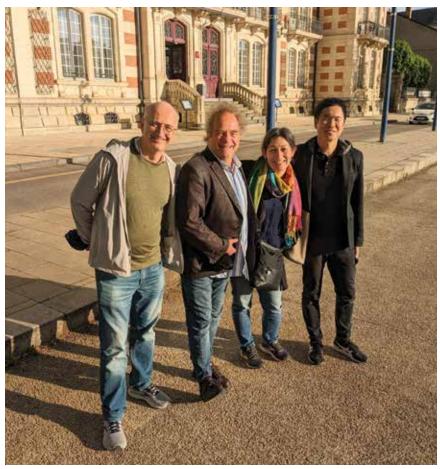


Photo: Ian Malkin





PROGRAM NOTES

JOSEPH HAYDN

Born March 31, 1732, Rohrau, Austria Died May 31, 1809, Vienna

String Quartet in B-flat Major, op. 76, no. 4 ("Sunrise")

WORK COMPOSED: 1797

Commissioned by and dedicated to Count Joseph Erdödy

WORLD PREMIERE: Undocumented **ESTIMATED DURATION: 23 minutes**

By the late 1790s, Joseph Haydn reached the height of his skill and fame. Earlier in the decade, Haydn was the toast of London musical society, with his two extended sojourns there and the well-received performances of his 12 London Symphonies. When Haydn returned triumphantly to Austria, he settled in Vienna, where he would spend the rest of his life.

In 1797, Haydn published his last set of string quartets as Op. 76. These final six quartets, added to the 72 that preceded them, definitively established Haydn's undisputed mastery of a genre he had essentially invented some forty years earlier.



1791 portrait of Haydn by John Hoppner

No. 4 is nicknamed "Sunrise" for the quiet dawn glow that opens the Allegro con spirito and gradually emerges as a brilliant, fully illuminated day. Haydn achieves this effect partly through a melody that ascends by half-steps, mirroring in sound the manner in which the morning's first light metamorphoses into full sun. The Adagio has a more muted, pensive quality, as if the sunlight from the first movement is now refracted through a thin layer of cloud. A cheerful Menuetto brightens the mood, featuring a lilting scrap of melody once again built on ascending half-steps. In the Finale, Haydn plays again with half-steps, alternating them in a teasing fashion, then abruptly doubles the tempo in a mad dash to the final chord.

Haydn's contemporary Charles Burney, an English critic and music historian, wrote to Haydn in 1799, declaring he had "never received more pleasure from instrumental music; [the Op. 76 quartets] are full of invention, fire, good taste, and new taste, and new effects, and seem the production, not of a sublime genius who has written so much and so well already, but of one of the highly-cultivated talents, who had expended none of his fire before."

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PROGRAM NOTES

BÉLA BARTÓK

Born March 25, 1881, Nagyszentmiklós, Hungary (now Sînnicolau Mare, Romania) Died September 26, 1945, New York City

String Quartet No. 2, op. 17, Sz. 67

WORK COMPOSED: 1915-17

Dedicated to the Quatuor Hongrois (Waldbauer-Kerpely Quartet)

WORLD PREMIERE: The Quatuor Hongrois (Waldbauer-Kerpely Quartet), gave the first

performance in Budapest on March 3, 1918

ESTIMATED DURATION: 28 minutes

"The question is, what are the ways in which peasant [folk] music is taken over and becomes transmuted into modern music?" asked Béla Bartók in 1920. He provided three answers: arrange existing folk melodies, or write original melodies using folk idioms. "There is yet a third way in which the influence of peasant music can be traced in a composer's work," Bartók continued. "Neither peasant melodies nor imitations of peasant melodies can be found in his music, but it is pervaded by the atmosphere of peasant music."

Bartók's String Quartet No. 2, written between 1915–17 as World War I raged across Europe, epitomizes this third approach. The war had curtailed Bartók's ethnomusicological field work, which he had pursued,

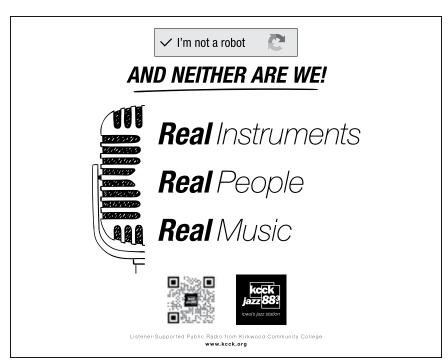


1927 portrait of Bartók

along with his good friend and colleague Zoltán Kodály for the better part of the previous decade. Since he could not gather new material while the war continued, Bartók stayed home and organized the material he had already collected. The second string quartet, one of only two original works Bartók wrote during the war years, reflects the synthesis of folk idioms into contemporary concert hall language. Each of its three movements feature concentrated distillations of the raw vibrancy Bartók found in folk music, transmuted into classical forms.

Kodály described the three movements as "1. A quiet life. 2. Joy. 3. Sorrow," and continued, "What emerges from the successive movements is not a series of different moods, but the continual evolution of a single, coherent, spiritual process. The impression conveyed by the work as a whole, though it is from the musical point of view formally perfect, is that of a spontaneous experience."





PROGRAM NOTES

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Born December 16, 1770, Bonn Died March 26, 1827, Vienna

String Quartet No. 8 in E Minor, op. 59, no. 2 ("Razumovsky")

WORK COMPOSED: 1805-06

WORLD PREMIERE: Undocumented ESTIMATED DURATION: 38 minutes

String quartets emerged as a distinct genre in the latter half of the 18th century. Musically, they appealed to composers like Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, because of their potential as symphonies-inminiature. With just four voices, a composer could more rapidly work out musical ideas for future large-scale works, and the stripped-down texture of four homogenous instruments allowed harmonic and structural elements to take center stage.

String quartets also became popular among amateur musicians, and were often played in private homes as entertainment. Until around 1800, a competent amateur musician could play any given string quartet well enough for both the musician and his/her listeners to derive great enjoyment from the effort.



1803 portrait of Beethoven by Christian Horneman

Beethoven's Op. 59 quartets, like so many of Beethoven's innovations, irrevocably changed the status quo. Beethoven had specific players in mind as he wrote the Op. 59 quartets, a commission from Count Razumovsky, the Russian ambassador to Vienna. In addition to Razumovsky himself, who was by all accounts a very capable violinist and regularly played second violin in his own string quartet, the first violinist in Razumovsky's ensemble was a professional violinist, Ignaz Schuppanzigh, who went on to form his own string quartet ensemble in 1804, with the aim of performing string quartets in public concerts. With such skilled players at hand, Beethoven had the freedom to write more technically challenging and nuanced music.

Harmonically, Beethoven made the unusual choice to remain in E for all four movements, rather than following convention by modulating from the home key of E minor to a related major key like G. The resulting tension and agitation of E minor (alleviated briefly by an excursion into E major in the second movement Adagio) thus builds over time until it erupts with a humorous explosion in the closing Presto. The opening Allegro is unsettled by its stop-and-start phrases and its unexpected harmonic explorations that range far and wide without ever fully resolving. Tension eases in the Molto adagio, which Beethoven marked "Si tratta questo pezzo con molto di sentimento" (play this passage with great feeling). Beethoven's friend and student, Carl Czerny, claimed "the Adagio in E major occurred to [Beethoven] when

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2023-2024

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contemplating the starry night and thinking of the music of the spheres." Accurate or not, this stately music is full of profound expression. Its graceful progression gradually dissipates the angst of the first movement.

Count Razumovsky specified Russian folk music be incorporated into the Op. 59 quartets, and Beethoven obliged in the Allegretto, whose trio section features a six-measure "Theme Russe" presented in a playful fugue. The lighter-hearted mood continues into the closing Presto, which launches itself with a merry tune for the first violin. The first three notes of the tune reappear and are tossed to and fro amongst all four instruments like a shuttlecock before the tempo increases and the music gallops headlong toward its final notes.

© Elizabeth Schwartz

Elizabeth Schwartz is a musician, writer, and music historian based in Portland, OR. She has been a program annotator for more than 25 years, and writes for ensembles and festivals across the United States, as well as internationally. Ms. Schwartz has also contributed to NPR's *Performance Today*, (now heard on American Public Media). www.classicalmusicprogramnotes.com



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 - Thursday, November 30, 7:30 p.m.
 - Sunday, January 28, 3:00 p.m.
- University Band and Concert Band Monday, December 4, 7:30 p.m.
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DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS

- Men on Boats by Jaclyn Backhaus Directed by Mary Beth Easley November 3-5 and 8-11 Theatre Building / David Thayer Theatre
- Dance Nation
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 Directed by Sarah Gazdowicz
 February 2-4 and 7-10
 Theatre Building / David Thayer Theatre

DEPARTMENT OF DANCE

- Dance Gala
 with guest artist Aaron Samuel Davis
 November 10–11, 7:30 p.m.
 Hancher Auditorium / Hadley Stage / Auditorium Seating
- Graduate Event
 December 1–2, 8:00 p.m.

 North Hall / Space Place Theater
- Undergraduate Concert
 December 7–9, 8:00 p.m.

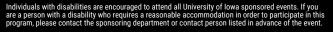
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