

Sunday, December 4, 2011, 3pm
Hertz Hall

Takács Quartet

Edward Dusinberre *first violin*
Károly Schranz *second violin*
Geraldine Walther *viola*
András Fejér *cello*

PROGRAM

Leoš Janáček (1854–1928) Quartet No. 1, “After Tolstoy’s *The Kreutzer Sonata*” (1923)
Adagio — Con moto
Con moto
Con moto — Vivo — Andante
Con moto (Adagio)

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) Quartet No. 1, Op. 25 (1941)
Andante sostenuto — Allegro vivo
Allegretto con slancio
Andante calmo
Molto vivace

INTERMISSION

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) Quartet in F major (1902–1903)
Allegro moderato
Assez vif, très rythmé — Lent — Tempo I
Très lent
Vif et agité

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Leoš Janáček (1854–1928)
 Quartet No. 1, “After Tolstoy’s
The Kreutzer Sonata”

Composed in 1923. Premiered on October 17, 1924, in Prague by the Bohemian Quartet.

In the summer of 1917, when he was 63, Leoš Janáček fell in love with Kamila Stösslová, the 25-year-old wife of a Jewish antiques dealer from Písek. They first met in a town in central Moravia during the First World War, but, as he lived in Brno with Zdenka, his wife of 37 years, and she lived with her husband in Písek, they saw each other only infrequently thereafter and remained in touch mostly by letter. The true passion seems to have been entirely on his side (“It is fortunate that only I am infatuated,” he once wrote to her), but Kamila did not reject his company, apparently feeling admiration rather than love for the man who, with the successful staging of his *Jenůfka* in Prague in 1915 eleven years after its premiere in Brno, was at that time acquiring an international reputation as a master composer. Whatever the details of their relationship, Kamila’s role as an inspiring muse during the last decade of Janáček’s life was indisputable and beneficent—under the sway of his feelings for her he wrote his greatest music, including the operas *Katya Kabanova*, *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *The Makropoulos Affair*, the song cycle *The Diary of the Young Man Who Disappeared*, the two String Quartets (the second of which he titled “Intimate Letters”), the *Glagolitic Mass* and the *Sinfonietta* for Orchestra.

The First Quartet was written in a blaze of creative inspiration in a single week—October 30 to November 7, 1923—just after Janáček had returned from the International Society for Contemporary Music Festival in Salzburg, where his Violin Sonata was performed. For his subject (most of Janáček’s compositions, whether for voices or instruments, grew from some literary or programmatic germ), he settled on Leo Tolstoy’s short story *The Kreutzer Sonata*, which was inspired by that music-hating author’s exposure to Beethoven’s Violin Sonata No. 9 in A major, Op. 47. Ian

Horsbrugh summarized the tale in his biography of Janáček: “In Tolstoy’s story, the tragic events of the marriage are told by the husband to the author as they travel together on a rail journey. The man, Pózdnyshv, is cynical about love and about marriage. He recounts with passion his jealousy of the violin-playing Trukhachévski, whom, ironically, he had introduced to his wife—‘a strange, a fatal force led me not to repulse him.’ One evening his wife and this man perform Beethoven’s *Kreutzer Sonata* to a small gathering, and, in spite of Pózdnyshv’s forebodings, the concert was a success. But the first movement of the Sonata had a ‘terrible effect’ on him. ‘It was as if quite new feelings, new possibilities of which I had till then been unaware, had been revealed to me,’ and, after the intense jealousy of the previous weeks, ‘that music drew me into some world in which jealousy no longer had a place.’ However, Pózdnyshv goes away on a business trip, but returns home unannounced, finds his wife in the company of the other man, and, gripped by a terrifying frenzy, he stabs her with his ‘curved Damascus dagger.’”

Like *Katya Kabanova* (in which the heroine is also killed by her jealous husband for her infidelity) and *The Diary of the Young Man Who Disappeared* (the true account of a Brno lad who vanished from home to run away with a Gypsy girl), Janáček’s First Quartet broaches the subject of love outside accepted societal bounds—all three works seem to have been pleas to Kamila to requite his own passion for her. Jaroslav Vogel observed that in these compositions, “the heroines could all be identified with Kamila. They gave Janáček—and this is a paradox of his one-sided love—the full possibility of showing the right of a woman to choose her love and happiness according to her own heart, subjects through which he became also a spokesman for a moral revolution.”

The Quartet was not the first musical realization that Janáček had attempted of Tolstoy’s story. During a short period of study in Vienna in May and June 1880, he wrote three movements of a string quartet inspired by the tale, and late in 1908 he composed a piano trio on the subject for a performance by the Friends of Art Club in

Brno on April 2, 1909. Since both earlier pieces are lost, it is impossible to compare them with the finished Quartet, but the composer’s friend and biographer Max Brod noted that “several of the ideas were employed.” The Quartet No. 1 was premiered in Prague on October 17, 1924, by the Bohemian Quartet (which had requested the work from the composer and which received its dedication), and was later heard at the ISCM Festival in Venice in September 1925 and in New York two years later.

Though it is possible to fit Janáček’s “Kreutzer” Quartet into traditional musical forms, the power and progress of the work may also be equated with the emotional unfolding of Tolstoy’s marital tragedy. The Quartet opens with a terse, rising three-note motive (short-short-long), perhaps the symbol of the heroine’s ultimate despair, which is immediately juxtaposed with a folk-like ditty that may reflect the story’s Russian setting. Contrast is provided by a lyrical theme of ambiguous rhythmic structure, evocative of the woman’s unsettled longing, and a darting figure of arching shape that is a superheated variant of the opening despair motive. These elements are played out to create a tonal picture of Tolstoy’s character, whom the composer described to Kamila as “a pitiable woman who is maltreated, beaten and murdered.” The second movement, the Quartet’s scherzo, is based on a theme, really not much more than a melodic fragment frequently terminated by a sour dissonance, that could depict either (or both) the foppish violin player or what Vogel called “the short-lived satisfaction of the heroine’s desire.” The internal regions of the movement contain an icy tremolo passage played *ponticello* (“at the bridge”), denoting, according to Vogel, “the chilling pang of temptation,” and a wide-interval melody that conjures the woman’s passion and her confessions of love. The third movement begins as a sentimental duet in close imitation for violin and cello whose melody was modeled on the second theme of Beethoven’s “Kreutzer” Sonata. The duet is repeatedly broken off by slashing interjections from the other instruments, however, and the tenderness of the beginning becomes exhausted as the music

proceeds. The movement ends with a tired sigh. The tragedy culminates in the finale, which bears such performance markings as “desperately,” “shyly” and “as in tears.” The music, largely derived from the stark motive that opened the Quartet, is arranged in a steadily increasing line of tension, which, wrote Vahn Armstrong, “mirrors the pace of Tolstoy’s story, in which the husband, believing himself deceived and mad with jealousy, rushes home and there murders his wife as her lover flees.”

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)
 Quartet No. 1, Op. 25

Composed in 1941. Premiered on September 21, 1941, in Los Angeles by the Coolidge String Quartet.

Benjamin Britten was 26 in 1939, and much unsettled about his life. Though he had already produced fourteen works important enough to be given opus numbers and a large additional amount of songs, chamber music, choral works and film and theater scores, he felt his career was stymied both by an innate conservatism among the British music public and by the increasingly assured threat of war in Europe. Additionally troubling was his proclaimed pacificism in a nation girding itself for battle. In January 1939, his friends poet W. H. Auden and novelist Christopher Isherwood left for America in search of creative stimulation and freedom from what Auden called the English artist’s feeling of being “essentially lonely, twisted in dying roots.” With the promise of a performance of his *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge* by the New York Philharmonic in August and the prospect (never realized) of writing a score for a Hollywood film about King Arthur, Britten decided to follow Auden, and in May he left England with his life-long companion, tenor Peter Pears, intent on becoming a citizen of the United States.

Since Britten and Pears planned on taking up permanent working status, they skirted immigration regulations by entering the United States through Canada, where they became

“legal British immigrants,” and spent several pleasant weeks in Toronto establishing contact with the representatives in that city of the composer’s publisher, Boosey & Hawkes. (In December, Britten composed the lighthearted *Canadian Carnival* for orchestra as a souvenir of his visit.) They arrived in New York in late June, and were invited to Amityville, Long Island, “for a weekend” by William and Elizabeth Mayer; it was to be their home for much of the next three years. Despite frequent bouts of depression and ill health, Britten composed freely in America, producing such important scores as the Violin Concerto, *Les Illuminations*, *Michelangelo Sonnets*, *Sinfonia da Requiem* and *Ceremony of Carols*. He spent the winter of 1940–1941 in a rowdy “commune” of artists that Auden had set up in an apartment building in Brooklyn Heights. The bohemian life style did not much suit the fastidious Britten, but he managed to complete a two-act “operetta” on the quintessentially American subject of Paul Bunyan there and arrange for its premiere at Columbia University in May.

Though Britten was growing increasingly anxious about his exile, he wanted to see more of the United States and perhaps try his hand at scoring a Hollywood movie, so he wangled an invitation to spend the summer with the British duo-piano team of Rae Robertson and his wife, Ethel Bartlett (for whom he had composed the *Introduction and Rondo alla Bulerca* the year before), at their home in Escondido, California, and drove cross-country with Pears in June. Soon after they arrived, Britten was paid a visit by Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, the noted American patron of the arts, who had received a glowing report about the young composer two years before from his teacher, Frank Bridge. Mrs. Coolidge gave the cash-short Britten a much-welcomed commission for a string quartet, and instructed that its premiere would take place in Los Angeles in September with the ensemble that she sponsored in that city. With a deadline imminent, Britten set to work immediately, though the only retreat he could find from the Robertsons’ constant practicing was a tool shed with a fan turned on at

full power; the new piece was completed before the end of July. Britten’s trips to Los Angeles to prepare the first performance were enough to convince him to abandon the idea of composing for Hollywood (“really horrible” he called it), though he did reach a crossroads in his career in California when he discovered an article in an English magazine about the poet George Crabbe (1755–1823) by E. M. Forster. Forster’s piece led Britten to Crabbe’s poem *The Borough*, which dealt with the rugged life in the Suffolk fishing villages near where the composer had grown up. Overwhelmed by homesickness, he wrote, “I suddenly realized where I belonged and what I lacked. I had become without roots.” The seed for his epochal opera *Peter Grimes* was thus sown 6,000 miles from its East Anglian setting. The Quartet No. 1 achieved sufficient success at its premiere on September 21st that it received the Library of Congress Medal later that year. In appreciation of their hospitality, Britten composed for the Robertsons a *Mazurka Elegiaca in Memory of Paderewski* (who had died in New York on June 29th) and a *Scottish Ballad* for Two Pianos and Orchestra, which they premiered with Eugene Goossens in Cincinnati in November. After his California sojourn, Britten went back to Amityville, where he stayed until sailing for home in March 1942.

The Quartet No. 1 opens in slow tempo with a shimmering curtain of gently syncopated harmonies suspended in the high strings above delicate pizzicato comments by the cello. A boldly contrasting motive in sharply marked rhythms serves as the formal second subject in this sonata-form movement. Developed versions of these two contrasting musics occupy the movement’s center, the first (shimmering harmonies) shorter on this appearance, the second (strongly rhythmic) more expansive. Both return near the movement’s end in a greatly compressed recapitulation. The *Allegretto con slancio* (“with enthusiasm”), the Quartet’s scherzo, begins as a hobgoblin sack of dry chords from which the triplet-driven theme is gradually let out. Enough triplets escape to provide an impatient central trio for the movement before they are stuffed back into the sack to restore quiet. A surprise

punch line caps this delicious joke. The *Andante* is framed by soft hymnal music whose brooding quality looks forward to the *Moonlight* interlude in *Peter Grimes* that paints the scene of the restless village at night. The smooth, wide-ranging arpeggios that accumulate in the central episode recall the cello’s music at the beginning of the Quartet. The energetic finale is spun from three ideas: a nimble motive that includes a flashing downward arpeggio; a unison melody in long notes draped upon animated cello figurations (which incorporate transformations of the arpeggio); and a galloping strain in triplet rhythms. These motives are interwoven and juxtaposed to create a freewheeling mixture of sonata and rondo forms, and provide a spirited and gleeful ending to this, the last major composition of Britten’s American years.

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) Quartet in F major

Composed in 1902–1903. Premiered on March 5, 1904, in Paris by the Heymann Quartet.

Ravel was admitted as a student to the Paris Conservatoire in 1889, the year in which the World Exposition introduced the Javanese gamelan orchestra and Russian music to Paris (and left the Eiffel Tower as an imposing souvenir), but his academic career proved to be somewhat less than meteoric. While gaining a reputation for such pieces as the *Pavane for a Dead Princess* and *Jeux d’Eau* during the next sixteen years, he slipped in and out of the Conservatoire, auditing classes with Gabriel Fauré and other teachers, and competing, never successfully, for the *Prix de Rome*. Despite his tenuous official association with the Conservatoire, Ravel retained an almost awed respect for Fauré, whom he regarded as his principal teacher and an important influence and inspiration for his music. At the end of 1902, after his second attempt to win the *Prix de Rome* had proven unsuccessful, Ravel felt it necessary, as had Claude Debussy a decade before, to subject the modernity of his musical speech to the rigorous discipline of one

of the most demanding of all Classical genres, the string quartet. “My Quartet represents a conception of musical construction, imperfectly realized no doubt, but set out much more precisely than in my earlier compositions,” Ravel said. He completed the first movement of the work in time to submit it to a competition at the Conservatoire in January 1903, but the reactionary judges, having become well entrenched in the attitude that caused them to frustrate Ravel’s every attempt to win the *Prix de Rome*, found this glowing specimen of musical color and light “laborious” and “lacking simplicity.” Ravel left the Conservatoire for the last time, and never again set foot in one of its classrooms. More angry than discouraged, Ravel continued work on the Quartet, and completed the score in April 1903.

Though Fauré, whose advice and friendship Ravel continued to value despite his disappointments at the Conservatoire (he contributed a *Berceuse sur le nom de Gabriel Fauré* to a memorial edition of the *Revue Musicale* upon his teacher’s death in 1924), found the finale “stunted, badly unbalanced, in fact a failure” and suggested its thorough revision, both Debussy and Vincent d’Indy praised the new piece. “In the name of the gods of music, and in mine, do not touch a single note of what you have written in your Quartet,” Debussy admonished; “it is a piece worthy of any composer’s work at the end of a long career,” d’Indy told the 28-year-old musician. Ravel agreed with his colleagues, and allowed the Heymann Quartet to premiere the work in its original form on March 5, 1904 in the auditorium of the Schola Cantorum, the institution d’Indy had founded in 1896 to offer an alternative to the Conservatoire for advanced musical instruction. Though its acceptance was not at first unanimous, the Quartet was the composition which solidified Ravel’s reputation as a leading creative figure, “one of the masters of tomorrow,” as Jean Marnold prophesied in a review in the *Mercure de France*. “Maurice Ravel’s Quartet in F,” wrote Alexis Roland-Manuel, “placed its author in the foremost rank of French musicians.... Ingenious and at the same time subtle, the Quartet is the ardent, the splendid

effort of youth confident in its force.” The work was published by Gabriel Astruc immediately after its premiere, and dedicated by the composer “to my dear teacher, Gabriel Fauré.”

The success of Ravel’s Quartet inevitably caused it to be compared with the one Debussy had written ten years before. The issue of which was the better work was hotly contested in the salons and cafés of Paris, and pitted the two friends against each other in a confrontation that neither could win. Though it was probably inevitable that the fastidious Ravel and the profligate Debussy would eventually part ways, it was over their Quartets that the rupture in their friendship came about. “It’s probably better for us, after all, to be on frigid terms for illogical reasons,” Ravel later rationalized. Though the two greatest musicians in turn-of-the-20th-century France retained a distant mutual respect for the rest of their lives, their close early relationship ran aground, perhaps ironically, on the most Mozartian of their compositions.

Ravel’s String Quartet in F, one of the most verdantly fresh and lucidly joyous works in the entire literature of chamber music, represents a type of spontaneous, youthful music-making for which the composer in his later years declared he would gladly exchange his acquired mastery and experience. The American composer and critic Virgil Thomson called it “the classic ideal that is every Frenchman’s dream of every foreigner’s dream of France. It is the dream of an equilibrium in which sentiment, sensuality and intelligence are united at their highest intensity [through craftsmanship].” The most immediately striking quality of the Quartet is the luminosity of its palette of tone colors, a characteristic that Norman Demuth saw indicating an important stride into the world of modern music: “Ravel proved that it was possible for a composer to place counterpoint second, the first essential being the making of lovely sounds without any suggestion of programmatic or even romantic background. In this respect, his String Quartet is a landmark in the history of chamber music and a beacon in the history of French music.” Ravel allowed many stylistic streams to flow

into his Quartet: Debussy’s pastel harmony, of course, is much in evidence, but so are the structural logic of Mozart, the reserved expression characteristic of French music from Couperin to Fauré, the shimmering sonorities of the Javanese gamelan that first enthralled Parisians at the World Exposition of 1889, and the exotic modalism and vibrant rhythmic inventions of Borodin and his Russian colleagues.

The Quartet opens with a sonata-form *Allegro* whose precise Classical structure is made to accommodate effortlessly the piquant modality of its themes. The principal subject is a lovely violin melody, accompanied by scalar harmonies in the lower instruments, that rises and falls through a long arc with elegance and ease. Passages of greater animation lead to the complementary theme, a melancholy song given in octaves by first violin and viola above the rustling background figurations of the second violin. The development section is as concerned with the rustling figurations as with the thematic materials. As in the Mozartian model, the recapitulation returns the earlier themes to balance and complete the movement. The second movement (marked “rather fast and very rhythmic”) is a modern scherzo, with snapping *pizzicati* and superimposed meters. The center of the movement is occupied by a wistful melody in slow tempo initiated by the cello. The third movement serves as a sort of structural foil to the carefully defined forms of the earlier movements. With its quickly changing sonorities, frequent juxtapositions of mood and tempo, and continually evolving themes, it is much in the character of an improvisation for quartet, a free rhapsody for four instruments joined by some magical centripetalism into an extraordinarily satisfying whole. The powerful, metrically irregular motive that launches the finale is brought back as the movement proceeds, much in the manner of the old rondo form, to separate the contrasting episodes that recall musical events from the earlier movements.

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RECOGNIZED AS one of the world’s great ensembles, the Takács Quartet plays with a unique blend of drama, warmth and humor, combining four distinct musical personalities to bring fresh insights to the string quartet repertoire. Winners of the 2011 Award for Chamber Music and Song presented by the Royal Philharmonic Society in London, the Takács Quartet is based in Boulder at the University of Colorado. The Quartet performs 90 concerts a year worldwide, throughout Europe as well as in Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea. The 2010–2011 season included a Bartók cycle in Sydney, and a three-concert series focusing on Schubert in New York City (92nd Street Y) and at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. The 2011–2012 season will focus on the music of Janáček, Britten, Debussy and Ravel, with performances in major cities across the United States, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. This season also finds the Quartet collaborating with pianists Garrick Ohlsson and Joyce Yang, and cellist Ralph Kirschbaum.

The Quartet’s award-winning recordings include the complete Beethoven Cycle on the Decca label. In 2005, the late Beethoven quartets won Disc of the Year and the Chamber Award from *BBC Music Magazine*, a *Gramophone* Award and a Japanese Record Academy Award. Their recordings of the early and middle Beethoven quartets collected a Grammy Award, another *Gramophone* Award, a Chamber Music of America Award and two further awards from the Japanese Recording Academy.

In 2006, the Takács Quartet made their first recording for Hyperion Records, of Schubert’s D804 and D810. A disc featuring Brahms’s Piano Quintet with Stephen Hough was released to great acclaim in November 2007 and was subsequently nominated for a Grammy. Brahms’s Quartets Opp. 51 and 67 were released in fall 2008, and a disc featuring the Schumann Piano Quintet with Marc-André Hamelin was released in late 2009. The complete Haydn “Apponyi” Quartets, Opp. 71 and 74, were released in November 2011.

The Quartet has also made 16 recordings for the Decca label since 1988 of works



by Beethoven, Bartók, Borodin, Brahms, Chausson, Dvořák, Haydn, Mozart, Schubert and Smetana. The ensemble’s recording of the six Bartók string quartets received the 1998 *Gramophone* Award for chamber music and, in 1999, was nominated for a Grammy. In addition to the Beethoven string quartet cycle recording, the ensemble’s other Decca recordings include Dvořák’s String Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 51 and Piano Quintet in A major, Op. 81, with pianist Andreas Haefliger; Schubert’s Trout Quintet with Mr. Haefliger, which was nominated in 2000 for a Grammy; string quartets by Smetana and Borodin; Schubert’s Quartet in G major and “Notturmo” Piano Trio with Mr. Haefliger; the three Brahms string quartets and Piano Quintet in F minor with pianist András Schiff; Chausson’s *Concerto* for violin, piano and string quartet with violinist Joshua Bell and pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet; and Mozart’s String Quintets, K. 515 and 516, with György Pauk, viola.

The Quartet is known for innovative programming. In 2007 it performed, with Academy Award-winning actor Philip Seymour Hoffman, *Everyman* in Carnegie Hall, inspired by the Philip Roth novel. The group collaborates regularly with the Hungarian folk ensemble Muzsikás, performing a program that explores the folk sources of Bartók’s music. The Takács performed a music and poetry program on a 14-city U.S. tour with the poet Robert Pinsky. In 2010, the Quartet collaborated with the Colorado Shakespeare Theatre and playwright

David Morse in a production of *Quartet*, a play set in Beethoven's later years when he was writing the A minor quartet, Op. 132.

At the University of Colorado, the Takács 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 Quartet's commitment to teaching is enhanced by summer residencies at the Aspen Festival and at the Music Academy of the West, Santa Barbara. 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 Dusinger 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 2011 each member of the Quartet was awarded the Order of Merit Commander's Cross by the President of the Republic of Hungary.

Edward Dusinger (*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 with Dorothy DeLay and Piotr Milewski at the Juilliard School.

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, Mr. Dusinger auditioned for the Takács Quartet, which he joined in 1993.

In July 2010, Mr. Dusinger released a recording of Beethoven's Violin Sonatas No. 9 and 10 with pianist David Korevaar on the Decca label. Future projects include a performance of Brahms's Double Concerto with András Fejér, and performances at the Plush Festival Dorset, where he will play Beethoven's Piano Trio, "The Ghost," with Charles Owen and Louise Hopkins, to be broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

Mr. Dusinger enjoys writing about music. In connection with the Takács Quartet's recent Beethoven cycles in London and Madrid, he has written articles for *The Strad* and *The Guardian*.

Mr. Dusinger lives in Boulder, Colorado, with his wife Beth, an archeologist who teaches at the University of Colorado, and their son Sam. He enjoys hiking in the mountains near Boulder and going to the theater. Never known as one of the more athletic members of his family, Mr. Dusinger has nonetheless benefited from Boulder's healthy culture of embracing the outdoors. He currently has plans to start training for the 2020 Boulder Boulder, sometime in the future.

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. He began playing the violin at age four, and at age 14 he entered the Béla Bartók Secondary Music School, where he met his future wife, also a violin student at the school. He was the recipient of the Franz Liszt Prize in 1983. Since 1986, Mr Schranz, his wife and their three daughters have made their home in Boulder, Colorado, where they often go hiking. He also loves to play tennis.

Geraldine Walther (*viola*) 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.

As soloist with the San Francisco Symphony, she performed the U.S. premieres of such important works as Takemitsu's *A String Around Autumn*, Lieberman's Viola Concerto, Holloway Viola Concerto and Benjamin's *Viola, Viola*. 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, Ms. 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 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 the Tokyo, Vermeer, Guarneri, Lindsay, Cypress and St. Lawrence quartets. She joined the Takács Quartet as a regular member in fall 2005.

In addition to her recordings for Hyperion with the Takács Quartet, Ms. Walther's recordings include Hindemith's *Trauermusik* and *Der Schwanendreher* with the San Francisco Symphony (London/Decca), Paul Chihara's *Golden Slumbers* with the San Francisco Chamber Singers (Albany), Lou Harrison's *Threnody* (New Albion) and, as a member of the Volkert Trio, *Delectable Pieces* (Con Brio).

Ms. Walther is the mother of two grown daughters and 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 age 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 would prepare for those sessions.

Mr. 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.

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

Sightlines

Takács Quartet

Sunday, December 4, 2–2:30 pm

Pre-performance talk by Anicia Chung
Timberlake, UC Berkeley Department
of Music.

This event is free to concert ticket holders.