



Sunday, February 21, 2016, 3pm
Hertz Hall

Takács Quartet

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

PROGRAM

HAYDN (1732–1809) String Quartet in G Minor, Op. 74, No. 3
“The Rider” (1793)
Allegro
Largo assai
Menuetto. Allegro—Trio
Allegro con brio

Timo ANDRES (b. 1985) Strong Language (2015)
Middens
Origin Story
Gentle Cycling

INTERMISSION

BRAHMS (1833–1897) String Quartet No. 3 in B-flat Major, Op. 67
(1875–1876)
Vivace
Andante
Agitato (Allegretto non troppo)—
Trio—Coda
Poco Allegretto con Variazioni

This performance is made possible, in part, by Patron Sponsor Carol Jackson Upshaw.

Cal Performances' 2015–2016 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

**String Quartet in G minor, Op. 74, No. 3,
“The Rider”**

JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809)

Composed in 1793.

Haydn’s first triumph in London ended in July 1792, and it took little effort for the venture’s impresario, Johann Peter Salomon, to exact a promise from the lionized composer to return for another series of performances several months hence. The sixty-year-old Haydn spent the intervening time at home in Vienna, recouping his strength after the rigors of the London trip, composing, teaching a few pupils (including Beethoven), and attending to domestic matters, most pressingly seeing to the demand for new quarters of his shrewish wife (whom he referred to, privately, as the “House-Dragon”). Anna Maria had discovered a house in the Viennese suburb of Gumpendorf that she thought would be just perfect, she explained to her husband, when she was a widow. Haydn was understandably reluctant to see the place, but he found it pleasing and bought it the next year. It was the home in which, in 1809, a decade after Anna Maria, he died.

One of the greatest successes of Haydn’s London venture was the performance of several of his string quartets by Salomon, whose abilities as an impresario were matched by his virtuosity on the violin. Such public presentations of chamber works were still novel at the time, and their enthusiastic reception made it easy for Salomon to convince Haydn to create a half-dozen additional quartets for his projected visit in 1794–95. Though composed for Salomon’s concerts, the new quartets were formally commissioned by Count Anton Apponyi, who had come to know Haydn and his music when he married one of the scions of the Esterházy clan, the composer’s employer for a half-century. Apponyi was an active patron of the arts in Vienna (he was a subscriber to Beethoven’s Op. 1 Piano Trios), owner of a fine collection of paintings, a good violinist, and a founder and president of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*, the city’s

principal concert-giving organization. The six quartets, divided into two sets as Op. 71 and Op. 74 when they were published in London in 1795, were dedicated to Apponyi. Salomon had played them to great acclaim at his Hanover Square Rooms concerts the preceding year.

The quartets, Op. 71 and 74 occupy an important niche in the history of chamber music as the first such works written expressly for public performance. Haydn, who was always sensitive to accommodating his audiences, made the quartets suitable for the concert hall by providing them with ample dramatic contrasts, basing them on easily memorable thematic material, allowing a certain virtuosity to the first violinist in the fast movements (to show off Salomon’s considerable skills), and giving them an almost symphonic breadth of expression. (In her study of the composer, Rosemary Hughes noted, “It is as if Haydn were pushing open a door through which Beethoven was to pass.”)

The most popular of the six quartets is the Op. 74, No. 3 in G minor, known as “The Rider” because of the galloping rhythms in its outer movements. The piece was a special favorite of Haydn—he signed the autograph books of several English admirers with the opening measures of the *Largo*—and it was one of the great successes of his 1794 London season. A gruff unison introduction opens the work. The cello initiates the dark-hued main subject, which is taken up by the other instruments before acquiring the galloping triplet rhythm that energizes much of the movement. The second theme, a dance-like strain reminiscent of the Polish *mazurka*, turns to brighter harmonic regions. The development section treats motives from the introduction and the second subject. A full recapitulation of the exposition’s themes rounds out the movement. The hymnal *Largo* is simple in form—A (major) – B (minor) – A (decorated)—but profound in expression, “one of Haydn’s most solemn utterances,” according to his biographer Rosemary Hughes. This music found considerable favor among

the composer's contemporaries, and it appeared in at least five piano arrangements during his lifetime. The cheerful elegance of the *Menuet* is balanced formally and expressively by the movement's somber minor-mode central trio. The sonata-form finale, filled with rushing figurations

Strong Language for String Quartet

TIMO ANDRES (b. 1985)

Composed in 2015.

Premiered on November 15, 2015, at Shriver Hall of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland by the Takács Quartet.

Timo Andres was born in 1985 in Palo Alto, California, grew up in rural Connecticut, studied composition at Juilliard's Pre-College Division during high school, and earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees at Yale as a student of Martin Bresnick, Ingram D. Marshall, Chris Theofanidis, and Aaron Jay Kernis; he also studied piano with Eleanor Marshall and Frederic Chiu. Andres' compositions, almost entirely for instrumental chamber ensembles and for piano, have been commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Wigmore Hall (London), Carnegie Hall, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, San Francisco Performances, Gilmore Foundation, Third Coast Percussion, Library of Congress, and other performers and organizations. As a solo pianist, he has appeared at such notable venues as Columbia University's Miller Theater, Lincoln Center, (le) Poisson Rouge, and Wigmore Hall, in works by contemporary composers as well as those of Ives and Mozart. As with many of his creative colleagues, a wide range of music informs Andres' works, from such traditional composers as Brahms, Mozart, and Schuman to Brian Eno, Radiohead, and the Icelandic band Sigur Rós—he has written a companion piano suite to Schumann's *Kreiseriana* and "re-composed" the left-hand part and cadenzas for Mozart's "Coronation" Concerto. Timo Andres' distinctions include awards and grants from the American Academy of

Arts and Letters, BMI, ASCAP, Meet the Composer, American Music Center, and Copland Fund.

Andres composed *Strong Language* in spring 2015 for the Takács Quartet, who premiered it in Baltimore on November 15, 2015 at Shriver Hall on the campus of Johns Hopkins University. The composer wrote, "I've been increasingly obsessed with the idea that longer pieces can actually be made out of less stuff as a way of supporting the weight of their structures. By 'stuff' I don't mean narrative drama—a lot can happen in 25 minutes—but actual musical ideas. *Strong Language* has three movements and exactly three musical ideas.

"*Middens* starts with a simple, undulating melody, played unaccompanied. Sonic detritus [a 'midden' is a refuse heap and often important cultural evidence for archeologists] gradually accrues underneath each pile of notes. With each repetition of the melody, the piles grow taller.

"*Origin Story* ventures outward from a static D minor triad: first in recalcitrant half-steps and little by little further afield. As the instruments gain confidence with repetition, they coagulate into an unstoppable melodic sequence. Each time it is played, the sequence shrinks a bar, cramming ever-increasing contrapuntal complexity into a smaller and smaller space.

"*Gentle Cycling* reverses the process of *Middens*, coaxing an expressive viola and cello duet from a spectral landscape."

String Quartet No. 3 in B-flat major, Op. 67

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)

Composed in 1875-1876.

Premiered on October 30, 1876, in Berlin by the Joachim Quartet.

In 1872 Brahms was appointed conductor of the Vienna *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*, succeeding the estimable Johann Herbeck as its director and inheriting a flourishing organization of 300 singers and nearly 100 instrumentalists. He led the ensemble's concerts

for three years, presenting important recent works by Schumann, Berlioz, Joachim, himself and others, and championing such masterworks of earlier generations as Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum*, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, and Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, as well as examples of the 16th-century *a cappella* music of Palestrina and Lassus that he loved so dearly. Despite the gratifications of the job, however, Brahms came to realize that he was not temperamentally suited to organizational life, so he announced his resignation. He gave his last concert with the *Gesellschaft* on April 18, 1875 (the soloist was the multi-talented singer George Henschel, who six years later was named the first Music Director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra), and thereafter never held another regular position, conducting only on occasion and always his own music. To celebrate his new-found independence, he accepted an invitation from the painter Anselm Feuerbach to spend an extended holiday at Ziegelhausen in a house nicely fronting on the right bank of the Neckar River, not far from Heidelberg. Brahms wrote from there to his stepmother in Hamburg that he was installed in "absolutely fascinating" quarters, and then went on to announce his contentment: "I am delightfully lodged and pass my time delightfully. Only too well, with Heidelberg, Mannheim and Karlsruhe all close at hand. You know the country, people and inns of Baden and can sing their praise.... In short, life is really quite happy." He met eagerly with friends old and new in his rooms and in neighboring towns and taverns, and enjoyed the company of the Ziegelhausen villagers—he discovered that the cook at the local inn, for example, a woman named Bertha whose girth was ample testimony to the quality of her work, made a particularly delicious variety of pancake, for which he rewarded her with a lively improvised waltz. "When he played, you couldn't even see his hands," Bertha marveled for years after the encounter.

As was his custom during his summer country retreats from the dust and heat of

Vienna, Brahms composed in Ziegelhausen, working there on the Third Piano Quartet (Op. 60), Third String Quartet (Op. 67) and some duets (Op. 66) and *lieder* (Op. 70). Despite the productivity of his German sojourn, Brahms referred to those pieces in his wonted self-deprecating manner as "useless trifles, to avoid facing the serious countenance of a symphony," a reference to the still-gestating Symphony No. 1, which he had been sketching on-and-off since at least 1855, and which he needed yet another year to complete, not finishing the score until September 1876, when it was assigned the next opus number available after the String Quartet, 68. The quartet was largely sketched by the time he returned to Vienna in the fall of 1875, but its finishing touches were not applied until the following summer, when Brahms was vacationing at Sassnitz on the island of Rügen as a guest of George Henschel; Fritz Simrock published the score later that year. The new piece was dedicated to Professor Theodor Engelmann, who had been the composer's host on his visit to Utrecht during his concert tour of Holland in 1876, and whose wife, the pianist Emma Brandes, had particularly pleased Brahms with her renditions of his keyboard music. Brahms' old friend and champion, the violinist Joseph Joachim, led his quartet in the work's premiere in Berlin on October 30, 1876.

The B-flat Quartet, conceived under the beneficent influence of Brahms' Ziegelhausen holiday, is the most lyrical in expression and halcyon in mood of his three examples of the genre, more closely related in spirit and form to the sunny Classical chamber works of Mozart and Haydn than to the transcendent instrumental romanticisms of Beethoven's last years. The opening sonata-form movement incorporates three thematic elements: a hunting-horn motive given immediately by the second violin and viola; a complementary melody initiated by the middle instruments below rustling figurations in the first violin; and a peasant-dance strain that juxtaposes its duple-meter rhythms with the galloping 6/8 phrases of the preceding music. The two

meters are briefly superimposed to serve as the bridge to the development section, in which each of the three motives is given a hearty working-out. A full recapitulation of the themes rounds out the movement. The *Andante*, disposed in a simple three-part form, is lyrical and rather luxuriant in its outer sections and somewhat more rambunctious in its mid-parts. The following *Agitato* is cast in the structure of a scherzo, but is really more like a nostalgic intermezzo in its wistful expression. (Brahms told Henschel, perhaps not in jest, that it was “the tenderest and most impassioned movement I have ever written.”) Much of the autumnal effect of this

music arises from its unusual sound palette, in which the lead is taken throughout by the husky-voiced (unmuted) viola while the violins and cello surround it with their veiled, muted sonorities. The finale is a set of eight variations and coda based on the curious theme (curious because it seems to end two measures early) announced at the beginning by the violin. Brahms’ masterful ingenuity in variations technique is displayed by the seventh variation, where the hunting-horn melody from the first movement is threaded through the formal and harmonic supports of the finale’s theme.

©2016 Dr. Richard E. Rodda



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. For 32 years the ensemble has been in residence at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

In 2015–16 the Takács returns to Carnegie Hall for two programs, one featuring a new work by composer Timo Andres, commissioned by Carnegie Hall, and one with pianist Garrick Ohlsson. They also perform with Mr. Ohlsson at Stanford, the University of Richmond, Spivey Hall in Atlanta, and at the University of Florida. For the first time in many years the Takács will perform in Santiago, Chile, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

In addition to their annual Wigmore Hall series in London, where the quartet are Associate Artists, other European engagements in 2015–16 include performances in Oslo, Amsterdam, Budapest, Hamburg, Hannover, Brussels, Bilbao and a concert at the Schubertiade in Hohenems, Austria.

During the 2016–17 season the ensemble will perform complete six-concert Beethoven quartet cycles at the Wigmore Hall, Princeton, the University of Michigan, and at UC Berkeley. In advance of these cycles

Takács first violinist Edward Dusinberre's book, *Beethoven for a Later Age: The Journey of a String Quartet*, will be published by the University of Chicago Press in May 2016.

The Takács became the first string quartet to win the Wigmore Hall Medal in May, 2014. 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 members of the Takács Quartet are Christoffersen Faculty Fellows at the University of Colorado Boulder. 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 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 members of the Takács are Visiting Fellows at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London.

The Quartet's award-winning recordings include the complete Beethoven Cycle on the Decca label. In 2005 *The Late Beethoven*

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Quartets won Disc of the Year and Chamber Award from BBC Music Magazine, a Gramophone Award, Album of the Year at the Brit Awards and a Japanese Record Academy Award. Their recordings of the early and middle Beethoven quartets collected a Grammy, 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 D.804 and D.810. Subsequent recordings for Hyperion include Brahms' Piano Quintet with Stephen Hough (Grammy nomination), Brahms' Quartets Op. 51 and Op. 67, Schumann's Piano Quintet with Marc-Andre Hamelin, the complete Haydn "Apponyi" Quartets, Op. 71 and 74 and the Schubert Quintet D956 with Ralph Kirshbaum. The three Britten Quartets were released in 2013, followed by the Brahms Viola Quintets with Lawrence Power, viola, and the Shostakovich Piano Quintet with Mr. Hamelin. Upcoming Hyperion recordings include the two Janacek Quartets and Smetana's "From My Life", the Debussy Quartet and the Franck Piano Quintet, again with Marc-Andre Hamelin, the Dvorak Op. 105 Quartet and his Viola Quintet Op. 97 with Lawrence Power, viola.

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.

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.

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.