



Sunday, December 7, 2014, 3pm
Zellerbach Hall

Takács Quartet

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

with

Erika Eckert, *viola*

PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat major,
Op. 130 (1825–1826)

Adagio ma non troppo — Allegro
Presto
Andante con moto ma non troppo
Alla danza tedesca: Allegro assai
Cavatina: Adagio molto espressivo
Finale: Allegro

INTERMISSION

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) Quintet for Two Violins, Two Violas, and
Cello in G minor, K. 516 (1787)

Allegro
Menuetto: Allegretto
Adagio ma non troppo
Adagio — Allegro

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Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
String Quartet No. 13 in B-flat major,
Op. 130

Composed in 1825-1826. Premiered on March 21, 1826, in Vienna, by the Schuppanzigh Quartet.

"I sit pondering and pondering. I have long known what I want to do, but I can't get it down on paper. I feel I am on the threshold of great things." These words of Beethoven, written in 1822, were prophetic. At the time, he was still involved in the five years of Herculean labor that finally yielded up the *Missa Solemnis* in 1823, a task that demanded all of his concentration lest it be crowded from his thoughts by a head (and sketchbook) full of yet unconnected ideas for a new symphony, into which, he was convinced, he needed to somehow take the unprecedented step of integrating a chorus. The string quartet, a genre for which he had not written in a dozen years, was also on Beethoven's mind, as evidenced by a letter of June 5, 1822, to the Leipzig publisher Carl Friedrich Peters urging him to consider issuing a new quartet that he would have ready "very soon." Burdened by poor health, financial difficulties (Rossini was appalled at the squalor of Beethoven's small, dank apartment when he visited him that year), the emotional drain of being guardian to a worthless nephew, and the obsession with finishing the *Missa* and the Ninth Symphony, it was, however, to be some time before he was able to return to quartet writing in earnest.

On November 9, 1822, Prince Nikolas Galitzin, a devotee of Beethoven's music and an amateur cellist, wrote from St. Petersburg asking Beethoven for "one, two or three quartets, for which labor I will be glad to pay you whatever amount you think proper." Beethoven was elated by the commission, and he replied immediately to accept it and set the fee of 50 ducats for each quartet, a high price, but one readily accepted by Galitzin. The music, however, took somewhat longer. The Ninth Symphony was completed in February 1823,

but Beethoven, exhausted, was unable to begin Galitzin's quartets until May. "I am really impatient to have a new quartet of yours," badgered Galitzin. "Nevertheless, I beg you not to mind and to be guided in this only by your inspiration and the disposition of your mind." The first of the quartets for Galitzin (E-flat major, Op. 127) was not completed until February 1825; the second (A minor, Op. 132) was finished five months later; and the third (B-flat major, Op. 130) was written between July and November, during one of the few periods of relatively good health that Beethoven enjoyed in his last decade. (Beethoven completed the Opp. 131 and 135 Quartets the following year to round out this stupendous ultimate series of his compositions.) Galitzin received his three new scores in fine copies by the middle of 1826, and promised payment "in a day or two." The Prince, for all his good intentions and evident sympathy for Beethoven's creative process, however, found himself, as he put it, "awkwardly placed" at the time, and the bill remained unpaid. (During the preceding year, one of Galitzin's children died, his wife fell gravely ill, and his indirect involvement in a revolutionary movement brought him to the edge of bankruptcy.) Beethoven sued for his money without success, and the account was not finally settled until 1852 (!) between Galitzin's son and Beethoven's heirs.

The premiere of the B-flat Quartet was given by the ensemble of violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh, a champion of Beethoven's works in earlier years and the first musician in Austria to undertake public quartet concerts. Schuppanzigh had been in Russia for some time and only returned to Vienna at the end of April 1823, when he resumed his series of concerts, which once again became major events in the city's musical life. There had been problems with the performance when Schuppanzigh's quartet gave the premiere of the E-flat Quartet (Op. 127) in March 1825 (exacerbated by Beethoven being unable to deliver the parts for this extraordinarily difficult music until just two weeks before the concert), and Beethoven granted them the honor

of introducing the B-flat Quartet with some trepidation. Perhaps that is why he chose to spend the evening of the première (March 21, 1826) in a local Viennese café waiting for news. Karl Holz, the second violinist of the ensemble and a close friend of the composer, brought a good report: the performance had gone well and the audience was generally enthusiastic, though everyone seemed puzzled by the Quartet's slow movements and, especially, by its finale, a gigantic construction in fugal style. Holz tried to humor the composer by telling him that the audience demanded encores of the lighter second and fourth movements. Beethoven was incensed. "Yes, these delicacies! Why not the Fugue? ... Cattle!! Asses!!!" Despite the composer's epithets, the first hearers of this Quartet were a highly sophisticated lot, perhaps the most knowledgeable and sympathetic audience in all of Europe at the time, and Beethoven must have ultimately found some merit in their misgivings, for nine months later he replaced the *Grosse Fuge* with an alternate finale of more modest dimensions. It was the last music that he completed. The *Fuge*, in both its original version and in a piano duet transcription, was published separately as Op. 133 two months after his death.

The B-flat Quartet comprises six movements balancing profundity and humor. Indeed, both of these sentiments are embodied in the very first page of the Quartet, which boldly contrasts a solemn *Adagio* proclamation with a skittering *Allegro* strain of Baroque rhythmic vivacity. (Beethoven had much earlier tried a similar experiment in the famous "Pathétique" Sonata, Op. 13, of 1799.) These two thematic cells together comprise the main theme, and are juxtaposed throughout the movement. A lyrical episode, embellished with the fast scales of the *Allegro*, provides contrast as a second theme. The following *Presto* movement is actually a tiny, quicksilver scherzo that is graceful, witty, and thoughtful all at the same time. Robert Schumann called the *Andante con moto* an "intermezzo," a term that is both perceptive and inaccurate. On the

one hand, the word implies a sort of informal music-making with little regard for creating a unified structural whole, and is certainly not applicable to this movement, which develops logically and inexorably from the motivic germs sown in its opening measures. On the other hand, the movement's very process of organic growth makes it difficult to classify as one of the traditional Classical formal types, and is probably the quality in this music which occasioned Schumann's appellation of implied musical miscellany, "intermezzo." Placed as emotional and stylistic foil between this movement and the deeply felt *Cavatina* is a *Danza tedesca* ("German Dance"), whose strict periodic construction, swaying rhythm, and buoyant spirits are much in the popular manner of Beethoven's day. Karl Holz reported that Beethoven "wrote the *Cavatina* ('short aria') amid sorrow and tears; never did his music breathe so heartfelt an inspiration, and even the memory of this movement brought tears to his eyes." Beethoven here rendered his grand emotion into music of profound simplicity and purity. In but one extraordinary passage, marked "*beklemmt*" ("oppressed"), does the first violin break into a kind of anguished free recitative whose obstreperous rhythm challenges the solemn gait of the lower instruments and threatens to rupture the music asunder. The emotion is purged, however, and the violin rejoins its companions to murmur once again the theme of the opening.

Beethoven left the question of the Quartet's finale unsettled, so that the work may be performed with either the *Grosse Fuge* of the original version or the substitute movement that he provided for it shortly before his death. This latter movement, a splendid piece of music, was written in the manner of continuous thematic expansion and development that was central to the style of his last years. With its thrusting rhythms and brief returns of its Gypsy-tinged opening theme, the movement has about it a rondo quality, though it is far advanced over the Classical version of that form in its tonal structure and in its stubborn

unwillingness to be bent into the tonic key of B-flat major.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)
Quintet for Two Violins, Two Violas, and
Cello in G minor, K. 516

Composed in 1787.

The Marriage of Figaro took Prague by storm when it opened there in December 1786. Mozart visited the city a month later to observe the opera's success for himself, and reported that "here they talk about nothing but *Figaro*." He was commissioned by Pasquale Bondini, the manager of Italian opera at Prague's National Theater, to write a successor to *Figaro*, and they settled on an opera based upon the popular tale of Don Juan. As soon as Mozart returned to Vienna in February, he engaged Lorenzo da Ponte, *Figaro*'s librettist, to provide the text for the new opera, and immediately began plans for the work's première in Prague in October. Mozart's head was full of *Don Giovanni*. So why, then, did he put aside this most precious of his projects to spend a month composing two string quintets, a medium he had not attempted since the B-flat Quintet (K. 174) written in Salzburg 14 years earlier? We don't know for sure. Alfred Einstein thought that the works might have been intended for Frederick William II, an *amateur* of the cello who had recently succeeded Frederick the Great on the throne of Prussia and promptly appointed cellist-composer Luigi Boccherini as his *Kapellmeister*. This theory seems baseless, however, because Mozart devoted the dedication of his last three string quartets (K. 575, K. 589, K. 590), composed in 1789–1790, to the Prussian king. It is more likely that Mozart simply needed some money, fast.

The year 1786 was the zenith of Mozart's career in Vienna. Perhaps because of intrigue but more probably because the geometrical expansion of deep expression in his newest music did not suit the fickle taste of the

Viennese, his local popularity began to wane. Though he tried to economize by moving from his spacious apartment in the Schullerstrasse near St. Stephen's Cathedral (now a Mozart museum known as the "Figaro House") to a smaller flat at 224 Landstrasse, he could not abandon his taste for fine clothes and elegant entertaining, and took on debts, several of which were to the textile merchant Michael Puchberg, a fellow Mason. On April 2, 1787, an announcement signed by Mozart appeared in the *Wiener Zeitung* stating that he was offering for sale by subscription three new quintets "finely and correctly written" which would be available at Puchberg's establishment in the Hohe Markt after July 1st. The intention was apparently that Puchberg would keep the proceeds to repay a debt. To create the promised trio of works (18th-century publishing practice demanded that instrumental works usually be issued in sets of three, six, or twelve), Mozart created anew the Quintets in C major (K. 515) and G minor (K. 516), and arranged the magnificent Wind Octet in C minor (K. 388) for five strings (given the curious Köchel number of 406). The quintets were completed in April and May during a hectic interruption in the composition of *Don Giovanni* (those same weeks saw Mozart's only meeting with Beethoven when the 16-year-old Bonn musician came to Vienna for a fortnight of lessons, and the death of Papa Leopold Mozart in Salzburg), but the number of subscribers was so small that Mozart placed another ad in the Viennese press on June 25th. This, too, was largely ignored, and the project was dropped, though Artaria & Co. brought out K. 515 in 1789 and K. 516 a year later. Mozart returned to the string quintet form in December 1790 and April 1791 with works in D major (K. 593) and E-flat (K. 614) for the wealthy Hungarian amateur violinist Johann Tost. They were the last pieces of chamber music that he wrote.

In its turbulent, proto-Romantic emotionalism, compact form, and harmonic daring, the G minor Quintet has frequently been compared to the Symphony in that same key

(No. 40, K. 550) composed a year later. Though the Quintet's closing movement finally achieves a tonality which Alfred Einstein characterized as a "disconsolate major," the unshakable focus of this magnificent musical canvas is deep pathos bordering on tragedy. Tchaikovsky, that melancholy Russian master who revered Mozart above all other composers, wrote to his benefactor, Mme. von Meck, "No one else has known as well how to interpret so exquisitely in music the sense of resigned and inconsolable sorrow." The Quintet's drama is joined with the first gesture of the opening movement, a portentous main theme of broken phrases, sighing chromaticism, and unsettled emotion presented by the high strings without a supporting foundation in the bass. The darker instruments then take over the theme, which is subjected to considerable chromatic modification before leading to the formal subsidiary subject, a sad strain given by the violin above the throbbing accompaniment of the lower strings in the somber tonic key of G minor. The music modulates only grudgingly to the structurally contrasting tonality of B-flat major, though the new key does nothing to mitigate the premonitory nature of the music. The development section is tightly woven and argumentative, and bridges to a full recapitulation of the themes from the exposition, which maintain their gloomy demeanor to the end of the movement.

With its almost violent changes of dynamics, its halting rhythmic motion, and its grim expression, the second movement is the least dancelike of minuets. Though the central trio section slips into the key of G major, it offers only tentative respite from the movement's

pervasive sense of foreboding. The sonatina-form *Adagio*, whose pathos is heightened by the muted sonorities of the strings, is among the most moving essays in Viennese Classicism, "far more probing, more emotional than any other slow movement in all of Mozart's music," according to John N. Burk. The finale consists of two broad musical chapters. The first is a deeply felt, G minor *Adagio*, a touching *cavatina* for the violin which serves as the preamble to the second section, which follows without pause. The music which closes the Quintet is a lovely rondo whose G major brightness does not so much dispel the troubling music that has come before as cast it into bold relief.

"It is no surprise," wrote Wolfgang Hildesheimer, "that the G minor Quintet has suffered an excess of emotional interpretation. And indeed it does speak a language that inspires us to share in its inexplicable process. Alternating between urgency and remoteness, it affects us (there can hardly be an exception) as profoundly tragic. Ultimately we cannot deny that our receptive potential is reacting not to an abstract progression of notes but to promptings from the rich supply of a magician. Mozart offers us experiences, suggests associations with moments we have lived through, traumas of the past evading extra-musical comprehension.... We cannot deny that we are moved. Why else should we need music but for its ability to satisfy our longing for emotional experience, without our having to undergo the deep tumult at its root. In the end, we always experience Mozart's music (like Beethoven's) as the catharsis resulting from one man's sublimation of his personal crisis."

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RECOGNIZED AS one of the world's great ensembles, the **Takács Quartet**—Edward Dusinberre, *first violin*; Károly Schranz, *second violin*; Geraldine Walther, *viola*; and András Fejér, *cello*—plays with a unique blend of drama, warmth, and humor, combining four distinct musical personalities to bring fresh insights to the string quartet repertoire.

The Takács became the first string quartet to win the Wigmore Hall Medal on May 10, 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. Appointed in 2012 as the first-ever Associate Artists at Wigmore, the Takács present six concerts every season there. Other European engagements in 2014–2015 include the Edinburgh and Bath festivals, the Louvre in Paris, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Vienna's Musikverein, London's Queen Elizabeth Hall, and concerts in Geneva, Florence, Cremona, and Budapest.

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. Based in Boulder at the University of Colorado, the Takács Quartet performs 90 concerts a year worldwide.

In 2014–2015, the Quartet performs throughout North America, returning to the Ravinia Festival and to Lincoln Center for two programs—one with guest violist Lawrence Power and the other with pianist Joyce Yang, and performs with pianist Marc-André Hamelin at Cal Performances, the University of Connecticut, and Orchestra Hall in Chicago. They also return after many years to Santiago, Chile, and São Paulo, Brazil.

Meryl Streep performed Philip Roth's *Everyman* program with the Takács at Princeton University on September 19, 2014. The program was conceived in close collaboration with Mr. 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 Quartet's award-winning recordings include the complete Beethoven quartet cycle on the Decca label. In 2005, the late Beethoven 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 Award, another Gramophone Award, a Chamber Music of America Award, and two further awards from the Japanese Recording Academy.

Their collaboration with Hyperion Records in 2006 started with a recording of Schubert's "Death and the Maiden" and "Rosamunde" quartets. 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. Other recordings for Hyperion include Brahms's Quartets Opp. 51 and 67; a disc featuring the Schumann Piano Quintet with Mr. Hamelin; the complete Haydn "Apponyi" Quartets, Opp. 71 and 74; the Schubert Quintet with cellist Ralph Kirshbaum; and the three Britten quartets and the Brahms viola quintets with violist Lawrence Power.

Upcoming Hyperion recordings include the two Janáček quartets and Smetana's "From My Life"; the Debussy Quartet and the Franck Piano Quintet with Mr. Hamelin; and Dvořák's Quartet, Op. 105, and his Viola Quintet, Op. 97, with Mr. Power.

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 ad-

dition to the Beethoven 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 Mr. 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 violist György Pauk.

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 in Santa Barbara. They are also Visiting Fellows at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama 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. 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 Dusing joined the Quartet in 1993 and violist Roger Tapping in 1995. Violist Geraldine Walther replaced Mr. Tapping in 2005. In 2001, ensemble 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.



Violist **Erika Eckert** is currently Associate Professor of Viola at the University of Colorado Boulder. Ms. Eckert has also served on the faculties of the Cleveland Institute of Music, Baldwin Wallace College, and the Chautauqua Institution in New York, where she served as the coordinator of the chamber music program for the Music School Festival Orchestra for three summers. In summer 2012, she was on the faculty of the Brevard Music Center and the North American Viola Institute.

As co-founder and former violist of the Cavani String Quartet, Ms. Eckert performed on major concert series worldwide, garnered an impressive list of awards and prizes, including first prizes at both the Walter W. Naumburg Chamber Music Competition and the Cleveland Quartet Competition. She has appeared on NBC, CBS, ABC, PBS, and NPR.

In recent seasons, Ms. Eckert has performed as guest violist with the Takács Quartet, appearing with them in Canada, Colorado, Tennessee, Oregon, and Vermont. She has also performed on numerous faculty recitals at the University of Colorado as well as soloing with the Music in the Mountains Purgatory Festival Orchestra, Four Seasons Chamber Orchestra, the University of Colorado Symphony Orchestra, the Boulder Bach Festival, and the Boulder Chamber Orchestra.

Her performing engagements have included the El Paso Pro Musica International Chamber Music Festival, the Australian Festival of Chamber Music, the Garth Newell Music Festival, Vail Bravo!, Music in the Mountains Chamber Music Festival, the Sitka Summer Music Festival Autumn Classics, Niagara International Chamber Music Festival, and Fontana Chamber Arts. Ms. Eckert has also performed chamber music recitals at the international french horn, flute, and double-reed conventions and solo performances at the SEAMUS and ICMC electronic music conferences.

Her teaching engagements have included presenting viola and chamber music pedagogy sessions and coordinating the chamber music program at the American String Teachers Association International Workshops in Brisbane, Australia, and Stavanger, Norway; serving on the faculties of the Perlman Music Program, the Quartet Program, and the Takács Quartet Seminar; and coaching chamber music at the ninth conference of the Suzuki Association of the Americas, the International School for Musical Arts, the Chamber Music Connection, the Interlochen Arts Academy, the Chamber Music Wyoming Young Artist Program, Britt Institute Chamber Strings, and the Madeline Island Music Camp Adult Chamber Music Program.

Ms. Eckert serves on the board of the Rocky Mountain Viola Society and for three years served as an adjudicator for the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts' Arts Recognition and Talent Search, the exclusive nominating agency for the Presidential Scholars in the Arts, and she appeared in their Academy Award-nominated documentary, *Rehearsing a Dream*.