TAKÁCS STRING QUARTET

Edward Dusinberre Violin Harumi Rhodes Violin Geraldine Walther Viola András Fejér Cello

with

Marc-André Hamelin Piano John Feeney Bass

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

(1732 - 1809)

String Quartet in G Major, Op. 76, No. 1, Hob.III:75 (1797)

Allegro con spirito Adagio sostenuto Minuet. Presto—Trio

Finale. Allegro ma non troppo

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

(1906 - 1975)

String Quartet No. 4 in D Major, Op. 83 (1949)

Allegretto Andantino Allegretto (attacca) Allegretto

INTERMISSION

FRANZ SCHUBERT

(1797 - 1828)

Quintet for Piano and Strings in A Major, D. 667 "Trout" (1819?)

Allegro vivace Andante Scherzo: Presto Andantino—Allegretto Allegro giusto

About the Program

By Lucy Caplan © 2019

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809) String Quartet in G Major, Op. 76, No. 1. Hob.III:75 (1797)

Haydn was at the top of his game when he wrote the six quartets that comprise his Op. 76. At 65 years of age, he was comfortably supported by the patronage of the Esterházy Court. Fresh off a glorious trip to the Great Britain, he had ascended to the position of Europe's most highly esteemed composer. With few external responsibilities, he was in an ideal position to accept a commission from the Hungarian count Joseph Erdody and devote his attention once more to a genre that had fascinated him throughout his life: the string quartet.

From the three confident chords at its outset, the quartet conveys self-assured expertise. The cello offers a buoyant theme and passes it to the viola with congenial cheer, launching a movement of conversational interplay among the four members of the ensemble. The second movement, like many of its counterparts in Haydn's late quartets, is the expressive crux of the work. The movement navigates a vast emotional topography—pathos, serenity, joy—at a luxuriously slow pace. Featuring a melodic line of almost impossibly lengthy phrases, it has the suspendedin-time character of an operatic aria. The third movement buzzes with energy, ricocheting from loud to soft, devious to elegant, rude to charming. In the final movement, which atypically begins in g minor, the players search frenetically for a path back to major-key sunlight. When they finally find it, they relax for a few moments of gracious song before the piece draws to a close with three more G-major chords, a satisfying echo of the gesture with which it began.

Haydn is often characterized as the "father of the string quartet," the first in a linear progression of composers who developed and refined the genre over the ensuing centuries. But that narrative is too simple. For one thing, Haydn was not only unusually talented, but also unusually privileged: his exceptionally secure circumstances allowed him a degree of artistic latitude unavailable to most. For another, his compositions were not the only ones to influence future composers: the many musical influences that crowded the turn-ofthe-nineteenth-century soundscape far exceed those composers and works that are well-remembered today. Perhaps instead of considering Haydn as a father figure, a better metaphorical model for understanding his lasting influence would be the string quartet itself—and especially a quartet as delightfully conversational as this one. We might imagine his voice as one among several, working collaboratively to expand and revise the genre's meaning as it entered a new century.

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–1975) String Quartet No. 4 in D Major, Op. 83 (1949)

If Haydn's Op. 76, No. 1 quartet is the product of an exceedingly comfortable environment. Shostakovich's Quartet No. 4 originates from a place of immense precariousness and danger. As a highly visible public figure in Stalin's Soviet Union. Shostakovich knew well that failure to appease the dictator could have catastrophic results. In 1936, he had been shaken by the infamously threatening *Pravda* review of his opera Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District. In 1948, his fears were compounded when the government issued what became known as the Historic Decree, an official statement that denounced "formalism" and banned an array of musical works, including several of Shostakovich's symphonies. It is unsurprising that on the heels of that event. Shostakovich focused primarily upon more anodyne genres, producing works of ultrapatriotic music and film scores that seemed designed to placate rather than provoke.

The Quartet No. 4 dates from this period (although it was not performed until 1953, months after Stalin's death). Perhaps the music conveys some of the composer's pervasive uncertainty and anxiety. It could be said that the first movement, which truncates abruptly after just a few minutes, symbolizes repression at the hands of a tyrant. The second movement, in which

the first violin soars sorrowfully over the ensemble before retreating into silence, might suggest a voice prevented from speaking truth to power. The scherzolike third movement skitters from player to player, punctuated by sharp pizzicati that may evoke an ominously militaristic march. And the lengthy fourth movement might be meant to evoke Jewish folk music, which Shostakovich is reputed to have characterized as follows: "it can appear to be happy while it is tragic. It's almost always laughter through tears."

Or maybe not. Perhaps the quartet is not a collection of hidden meanings, a trail of clues for the listener to decode. As musicologist Richard Taruskin has argued, the inclusion of such subtly subversive material would itself have been unacceptably risky given the volatile circumstances under which the composer lived and worked. Attempts to figure out the "true" meaning of Shostakovich's music, then, are in some ways a necessarily futile endeavor. That murkiness is only increased by the fact that ostensibly autobiographical sources published after the composer's death, including the influential book *Testimony* (from which the above comments about Jewish music are taken), have since been discredited. Absent authoritative evidence, it is helpful to consider a phrase from the author Julian Barnes' recent novel about Shostakovich's life. In Barnes' telling, the composer suggests that music, "if it is strong and true and

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pure enough to drown out the noise of time, is transformed into the whisper of history." The quartet's whispers, as ambiguous and ambivalent as they might sound, can speak for themselves.

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828) Quintet for Piano and Strings in A Major, D. 667 "Trout" (1819?)

Viewers of the delightful 1969 documentary The Trout are treated to a rare sight: we get to watch five rising-star, twentysomething musicians simply have fun. Just before they go onstage to perform Schubert's "Trout" Quintet in London, cellist Jacqueline du Pré and violinist Itzhak Perlman giggle and swap instruments; Perlman and conductor Zubin Mehta (playing bass) join forces to play one violin in a hilarious rendition of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto; pianist Daniel Barenboim and violinist Pinchas Zukerman laugh at their antics. In these pre-performance moments, we are able to witness the pleasure and silliness of making music with friends—feelings all too often obscured amid the ritual formality of the concert hall.

It is highly appropriate that the "Trout" Quintet inspired this joyous scene. Like the musicians featured in the documentary. Schubert was young—just 22—when he composed the piece. During a relaxing summer spent in the country town of Steyr, west of Vienna, he met a wealthy merchant and amateur cellist, Sylvester Paumgartner, who commissioned the piece. Paumgartner both specified the unusual instrumentation and requested that the work incorporate a set of variations on Schubert's 1817 song "Die Forelle" ("The Trout"). Over its five movements, the quintet maintains a wonderfully amiable atmosphere, the musical equivalent of a midsummer day when the sun still shines well into the evening. A first movement in sonata form is expansive and carefree, while the second has a songlike cast. If the third movement hints briefly at a storm on the horizon, the sun comes out again during its elegant trio section. The

fourth movement—the promised set of variations on Schubert's song—begins simply, then increases in harmonic and textural complexity, allowing each musician to take a turn at the lovely melody in the process. A vibrant finale closes out the work with abundant charm and grace.

The music critic Conrad Wilson once wrote of the "Trout" Quintet that "If you wish to introduce somebody to the world

of chamber music, this is surely the work with which to do so." Wilson's words no doubt allude to the work's enduring popularity, but they also speak to the emotional timbre of the scene captured in the documentary. Schubert's quintet exemplifies the feelings that chamber music makes possible, the way it can become an experience of collective joy for performers and listeners alike.



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Schubert's "Trout" Quintet was first performed on the series in 1909 by the Kneisel String Quartet and friends, and has remained a PUC favorite for over a century as one of the most popular selections in our "favorite pieces of chamber music" audience survey.

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This concert marks the Takács Quartet's 21st appearance on the Princeton University Concerts series.

The Takács Quartet, now entering its forty-fourth season, is renowned for the vitality of its interpretations. At the same time, though, there is an uncompromising attention to detail. Based in Boulder at the University of Colorado, Edward Dusinberre, Harumi Rhodes (violins), Geraldine Walther (viola) and András Fejér (cello) perform eighty concerts a year worldwide.

During the 2018-19 season the ensemble will continue its four annual concerts as Associate Artists at London's Wigmore Hall. In August 2018, the Quartet appeared at the Edinburgh, Snape Proms, Menton and Rheingau Festivals. Other European venues later in the season include Berlin, Cologne, Baden-Baden, Bilbao and the Bath Mozartfest. The Quartet will perform extensively in the United States, including two concerts at New York City's Lincoln Center, and at the University of Chicago, and Berkeley. In addition to today's concert, the quartet performed Schubert's sublime string quintet on the Performances Up Close series in the fall. A tour with

pianist Garrick Ohlssohn will culminate in a recording for Hyperion of the Elgar and Amy Beach piano quintets. The latest Takács CD, to be released in the summer of 2019, features Dohnányi's two piano quintets and his second string quartet, with pianist Marc-André Hamelin.

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

Princeton audiences will remember that the Takács Quartet performed Philip Roth's Everyman program with actress Meryl Streep in 2014. The program was conceived in close collaboration with Philip Roth. The Quartet is known for such innovative programming. They first performed Everyman at Carnegie Hall in 2007 with the late actor 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. Aspects of the quartet's interests and history are explored in Edward Dusinberre's book, Beethoven for a Later Age: The Journey of a String Quartet, which takes the reader inside the life of a string quartet, melding music history and memoir as it explores the circumstances surrounding the composition of Beethoven's quartets.

The Takács records for Hyperion Records, and their releases for that label include string quartets by Haydn, Schubert, Janácek, Smetana, Debussy, and Britten, as well as piano quintets by Franck and Shostakovich (with Marc-André Hamelin), and viola quintets by Brahms (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

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. Through the university, two of the quartet's members benefit from the generous

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loan of instruments from the Drake Instrument Foundation. The members of the Takács are on the faculty at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, where they run an intensive summer string quartet seminar, and Visiting Fellows at the Guildhall School of Music.

The Takács Quartet was formed in 1975 at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest by Gabor Takács-Nagy, Károly Schranz, Gabor Ormai and András Feiér, 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. After several changes of personnel, the most recent addition is second violinist Harumi Rhodes, following Károly Schranz's retirement in April 2018. 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.

Marc-André Hamelin made his Princeton University Concerts debut in recital in 2015.

Pianist Marc-André Hamelin is known worldwide for performances of established repertoire, as well as for his intrepid exploration of the rarities of the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries - in concert and on disc. The current season includes Mr. Hamelin's return to Carnegie Hall for a recital on the Keyboard Virtuoso Series plus recitals in Montreal, Seattle, Berlin, Florence, Salzburg, Wigmore Hall, Istanbul, among others. In repertoire from Haydn and Mozart to Ravel and Rachmaninoff, Hamelin appears with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles, Stuttgart, and Moscow State Philharmonics, the Vancouver, Cincinnati, and Oregon Symphonies, and tours in Europe with the Amsterdam Sinfonietta.

With orchestra, he debuted at the Orchestre de Paris with Alan Gilbert conducting the Ravel Concerto for the Left Hand; played the Schoenberg Concerto with the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin in the opening weeks of Vladimir Jurowski's inaugural season; Stravinsky with the Seattle Symphony and Ludovic Morlot; Haydn with Osmo Vänskä and the Minnesota Orchestra: Mozart with Nicholas McGegan conducting the Cleveland Orchestra: the two Brahms concerti with the Moscow Philharmonic: and the Brahms D-minor concerto with Andrew Manze conducting the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic.

He was a distinguished member of the jury of the 15th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 2017 where each of the 30 competitors in the preliminary round performed Hamelin's *Toccata on L'Homme armé* which marked the first time the composer of the commissioned work was also a member of the jury. Although primarily a performer, Mr. Hamelin has composed music throughout his career; the majority of his works are published by Edition Peters.

Mr. Hamelin records exclusively for Hyperion Records. His most recent releases are a disc of Schubert's Piano Sonata in B-Flat Major and Four Impromptus, a landmark disc of Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring and Concerto for Two Pianos with Leif Ove Andsnes. Morton Feldman's For Bunita Marcus. Medtner's Piano Concerto No. 2, and Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Vladimir Jurowski. His Hyperion discography of over 60 recordings includes concertos and works for solo piano by such composers as Alkan, Godowsky, and Medtner, as well as brilliantly received performances of Brahms, Chopin, Liszt, Schumann, and Shostakovich.

He was honored with the 2014 ECHO Klassik Instrumentalist of Year (Piano) and Disc of the Year by *Diapason Magazine* and *Classica Magazine* for his threedisc set of Busoni: Late Piano Music and an album of his own compositions, Hamelin: Études, which received a 2010 Grammy nomination (his ninth) and

a first prize from the German Record Critics' Association. The Hamelin études are published by Edition Peters. Born in Montreal, Marc-André Hamelin is the recipient of a lifetime achievement award from the German Record Critics' Association. He is an Officer of the Order of Canada, a Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Québec, and a member of the Royal Society of Canada.

This concert marks John Feeney's Princeton University Concerts debut.

John Feeney is principal double bass of Orchestra of St. Luke's and the period instrument groups American Classical Orchestra, Sinfonia New York, and Opera Lafayette in Washington, D.C. This May he will play principal bass with Boston's Handel and Haydn Society. He has also performed as a quest bassist with the Vienna Philharmonic. A chamber musician and soloist of international renown, he is a frequent guest with the Smithsonian Chamber Players, Four Nations Ensemble, and Artek. He won first prize in the Concert Artists Guild and Zimmerman-Mingus International Competitions and was a medalist-prizewinner in the Geneva and Isle of Man Competitions. He gave the 2010 world premiere performance of Domenico Dragonetti's Concerto in D with the American Classical Orchestra. In 2009 he founded the DNA Quintet. recording and publishing the premieres of chamber music by Dragonetti.

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Glimpses of a Remarkable History: Princeton University Concerts over the Past 125 Years

By Professor Emeritus Scott Burnham, © 2018

Imagine Princeton in 1894, the year Princeton Borough began governing itself as an entity fully independent from Princeton Township. And now imagine the Old Princeton Inn, a building that stood where Borough Hall stands today. At half past three on a Monday afternoon in late October, a group of music enthusiasts gathered there to enjoy a concert performance by the renowned Kneisel Quartet. They concluded with a piece of new music, namely Antonin Dvorak's most recent string quartet, the so-called "American" quartet, which the Kneisel players had premiered in Boston some months earlier and which was one of the fruits of Dvorak's extended stay in America.

That inaugural concert was organized by the "Ladies Musical Committee," founded in 1894 by Philena Fobes Fine. Mrs. Fine was a remarkable spirit who persuaded the community to rally round and underwrite this new venture, which in its early years presented about six concerts annually. She was the first in a long line of such spirits: to an extraordinary degree, the history of Princeton University Concerts is a history of determined women making wonderful things happen. The initial committee was all women, and the driving forces for supporting and managing the concert series throughout the entire history of Princeton University Concerts have been mostly women, exclusively so for the first fifty years. Mrs. William F. Magie became chair of the

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committee after Mrs. Fine's death in 1928 (in an interesting parallel, her husband, William F. Magie, had succeeded Mrs. Fine's husband, Henry B. Fine, in the role of Princeton University's Dean of Faculty back in 1912). And for a fifteen-year span during the 20s and 30s, Mrs. Williamson U. Vreeland did much of the heavy lifting, organizing the concerts, choosing the artists, and managing the finances.

Had you been around in the 1920s, you would have caught the Princeton debut of violinist Fritz Kreisler in March of 1920: or heard Pablo Casals, then lauded as the world's greatest cellist, play Bach in 1922; or heard 23-year-old Jascha Heifetz play five encores after his concert on April 7, 1924; or attended the historic concert in 1925 that featured Polish pianist, composer and statesman Ignaz Paderewski in a program including Beethoven's "Waldstein" Sonata and Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody. Not to mention a steady array of orchestral performances by the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

A turning point for the Ladies Musical Committee came in 1929, marking a new and crucial stage in its relationship with Princeton University. The first move was to stabilize and augment the committee's finances. Mrs. Fine had led the concert series for over thirty years at the time of her death. During those years, she had managed to raise about \$35,000 to support the concerts. In 1929, Mrs. Jenny Hibben and others helped increase

that number to about \$52,000, and the committee established a fund in Mrs. Fine's memory, stating that the monies had "been raised for the purpose of securing for Princeton audiences better music than they could otherwise afford." The name of the committee changed to Princeton University Concerts Committee at this time as well, but its constitution insisted that "at least a majority of the members shall be women" (this wording was not altered until 1977!). In accordance with the name change, the University became increasingly involved throughout the 1930s and 40s. Nominations to the committee had forthwith to be approved by the President of Princeton University Ithe President at the time was John Grier Hibben, husband of Mrs. Jenny Hibben); the university Controller's Office soon began keeping the books; and in 1946 President Harold Dodds authorized payment for the building of a stage set that would enable the chamber concerts to move to McCarter Theater, where the orchestral concerts and showcase recitals were already happening.

When Mrs. Magie resigned in 1944, Professor Roy Dickinson Welch took over as head of the committee. Welch was also the father of the Music Department, which began in 1934 as a subsection of the Art and Archaeology department. A dozen years later, in 1946, Music became an official university department, housed in Clio Hall. In that same year, Welch hired Mrs. Katharine (Kit) Bryan as concert manager. They had collaborated before: in 1935, Mrs. Bryan co-founded the

Princeton Society of Musical Amateurs with Welch; the group still exists today.

Among the many highlights during Mrs. Magie's tenure was the historic 1937 appearance of American singer Marian Anderson, who sang four sets of arias and Lieder and then concluded with a stirring set of spirituals. Also notable were several concerts by the Trapp Family Singers in the early 1940s. Highlights of Mrs. Bryan's early years as concert manager include performances by the recently formed Bach Aria Group, founded and directed by Princeton legend William H. Scheide.

When Mrs. Bryan retired in 1964, she was replaced by Mrs. Maida Pollock, who greatly professionalized the entire operation, bringing it up to speed in ways that are still in effect today. A force of nature, Mrs. Pollock ran the Princeton University Orchestra as well, and was also very involved with the Princeton Friends of Music. Due to the greatly increased expense of hiring symphony orchestras, the concert series stopped programming orchestras in 1975 and began focusing exclusively on chamber music. In a recent interview, Pollock asserted that her most cherished goal was to get a worthy concert hall for chamber music up and running at the university, and in the 20th year of her 22-year tenure, her efforts were finally rewarded. Richardson Auditorium became the concert hall it is today in 1984, thanks to a donation from David A. Richardson '66, in memory of his father David B. Richardson '33. a lifelong enthusiast of classical music.

One of the most memorable nights of Mrs. Pollock's reign was almost a disaster, because Spanish singer Victoria de los Ángeles had to cancel at nearly the last minute. Pollock quickly obtained the services of Russian soprano Galina Vishnevskaya, who happened to be the wife of Mstislav Rostropovich; he played the piano for her in an electrifying performance.

After Mrs. Pollock retired, Nate Randall took over in 1988. Randall broadened the purview of Princeton University Concerts, introducing programs of jazz music and world music. He also oversaw the 100th anniversary season of the series, and assisted with the inauguration of the Richardson Chamber Players, along with their Founding Director, Michael Pratt.

Our current Concert Director, Marna Seltzer, came to Princeton in 2010. Recognized by Musical America in 2017 as one of their "30 Movers and Shapers," Seltzer's many audience-friendly innovations have clearly established Princeton University Concerts at the forefront of the future of classical music. These include new ways to interact with the musical artists, such as live music meditation sessions, late-night chamber jams, and "Performances Up Close" that feature onstage seating. In introducing these additional ways to get involved in music. Marna Seltzer continues to honor the original and sustaining intention of Philena Fobes Fine: that Princeton

University Concerts should reflect the values of our community as a whole. As such, it enjoys pride of place as perhaps the finest ongoing town/gown affiliation in Princeton.

The history of Princeton University Concerts has been remarkably consistent for these past 125 years. Passionate, committed women (and a few men) have presented the premier musical artists of their age, from fiery 20-somethings taking the concert world by storm to larger-than-life stars who can captivate us merely by taking the stage. An exalted lineup of the world's finest string quartets has always maintained pride of place in the series, from the Kneisel Quartet in the first decades through the Budapest Quartet in the 1930s to the Takács. Brentano, and Jerusalem Quartets today. A special relationship has always endured between all these musical artists and their Princeton presenters. Back in the day, Mrs. Fine, Mrs. Magie and Mrs. Vreeland often entertained artists after the concert; as an early history of the Concerts Committee put it: "the artists came to think of Princeton people as their friends." That holds true now more than ever, for our visiting artists regularly declare that they love playing in Richardson Auditorium, they love the way they are treated by Marna and her staff, and they love all of you, who so demonstrably value the experience of music, who take in and give back the brilliant energy of their cherished performances.

"Music offers infinite capacity for infinite self-renewal." This is what Music Department founder Roy Dickinson Welch fervently believed, and this is what Princeton University Concerts will continue to offer us, one unforgettable concert after another.

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