



# Takács Quartet

Schumann and Mendelssohn

Sunday, April 10, 4 p.m.

Monday, April 11, 7:30 p.m.

Grusin Music Hall

## Program

### Piano Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 44

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

- I. Allegro brillante
- II. In modo d'una marcia. Un poco largamente
- III. Scherzo. Molto vivace
- IV. Allegro, ma non troppo

*With David Korevaar, piano*

### — Intermission —

### Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

- I. Allegro moderato, ma con fuoco
- II. Andante
- III. Scherzo—Allegro leggierissimo
- IV. Presto

*With the Ivalas Quartet:*

*Reuben Kebede, violin*

*Tiani Butts, violin*

*Aimée McAnulty, viola*

*Pedro Sánchez, cello*

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#### PLEASE NOTE

- Masks are optional in public indoor spaces on the CU Boulder campus as of March 7, 2022.
- Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the house manager.
- Photography and video recordings of any type are strictly prohibited during the performance.
- Smoking is not permitted anywhere. CU Boulder is a smoke-free campus.

# Program notes

Notes by Marc Shulgold

## Piano Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 44

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

It's possible to hear Schumann's magnificent Piano Quintet without an awareness of the composer's ongoing battle with his fragile personality. Yet, our understanding of the joy and pain he experienced adds immeasurably as we journey through Op. 44, knowing that the dramatic story of his life will always be inseparable from his music. That said, listeners can simply bask in the music's grandeur without considering the man and his emotional state in 1842, his "Year of Chamber Music." Typical of Schumann, it was a period of furious productivity (various works for trio, quartet and quintet). He sketched out the entire Piano Quintet in a mere five days in September, then spent a few weeks polishing it up. In the first private and public performances of the work, it was consistently praised by all who heard it (except for the curmudgeonly Franz Liszt), even though its success couldn't erase stretches of Schumann's depression.

After his marriage to Clara Wieck in 1840, the composer wrote reams of songs and piano pieces before shifting to intimate instrumental music. Much has been written about the Piano Quintet's historical significance, how it defined a new genre (the few earlier keyboard quintets usually included a double bass). Yes, its combination of piano and traditional string quartet proved an inspiration to Brahms, Dvořák, Franck and others who followed. (By the way, Schumann had been simultaneously working on his Piano Quartet, Op. 47, also in E-flat.) What's most important in the quintet is the unprecedented orchestral sound that explodes immediately with those first four commanding chords, revealing a confidence that continues unabated. And still, Schumann couldn't overcome his anguish.

We can understand his self-doubt at the fact that it was Clara who was the star of the household. It was Clara who conquered Europe with her brilliant pianism, repeatedly touring the continent, leaving Robert at home to work and look after the children (she would give birth to eight). Ironic that it would be Clara who became the quintet's champion, performing it everywhere long after her husband's

death. Accepting criticism never came easy for the composer. A year after his friend Mendelssohn had died, Schumann argued vehemently at the dinner table with Liszt, who dismissed the quintet as "too Leipzig-like"—a regrettable poke at Mendelssohn, who had heroically substituted for Clara at a private run-through, sight-reading his part when she felt too ill to play. Incidentally, it was Mendelssohn who offered some suggestions at that hearing in December of 1843, including the bold idea of inserting a second Trio section in the Scherzo.

Apart from its groundbreaking instrumentation, Op. 44 contains a wealth of new ideas and an instinctive understanding of how to balance keyboard and strings. All five players remain involved, as one memorable theme follows another. Particularly innovative (in addition to those two Trio segments in the Scherzo) is the unfolding drama of the second movement, marked "in the mode of a march." Funereal in its minor-key sadness, the theme suddenly turns angry—perhaps symbolic of Schumann's perpetual mood swings—before resolving back into quiet grief. Another touch of striking originality is the unexpected return of those four opening chords near the end of the finale, here presented in a brief fugue.

There is greatness on every page, something that Clara recognized even before Op. 44 was finished. In September 1842, she wrote in her diary, "(Robert) has all but completed a quintet, which, from what I have overheard, appears to be another splendid work—a work full of power and freshness!"

## Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Genius at a young age has always astounded us. The pre-teen Mozart, of course, remains a miraculous marvel. Not quite as miraculous—but equally marvelous—is the early brilliance shown by Felix Mendelssohn. Though we think of his magnificent Octet (penned at age 16) and Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (written a year later) as his first compositions, the young man already had a bundle of works under his belt: a dozen string symphonies, some concertos and chamber works and, from his 15th year, a full-fledged Symphony No. 1. It's hard to fathom, but this Octet for two string quartets from 1825 represents the beginning of Mendelssohn's mature output.

He remained particularly proud of the work, calling it his favorite and noting that he had “a lovely time writing it.” Later, when conducting that first symphony, he used a fleshed-out version of the String Octet’s *Scherzo* as a substitute movement—no surprise, considering its richly composed sound. He instructed that Op. 20 should be played “by all the instruments in symphonic orchestral style. *Pianos* and *fortes* (soft and loud passages) must be strictly observed and more strongly emphasized than is usual in pieces of this character.”

The String Octet was presented to Eduard Rietz, a dear friend and fine violinist on the occasion of his birthday. Rietz had already served as dedicatee of an early violin concerto in D minor (no relation to the brilliant E-minor concerto penned almost 20 years later). Opus 20’s instrumentation was not the first published piece for eight strings. German composer Louis Spohr (1784-1859) wrote four works for double string quartet, but even he recognized the stark difference between his approach and Mendelssohn’s. He observed that the young composer’s score was far more “collaborative,” integrating the eight players into one cohesive unit, whereas Spohr envisioned his ensemble as two separate quartets.

Mendelssohn’s eight musicians are kept endlessly busy, as musical lines are playfully tossed about, making the Octet as much fun to watch as it is to hear. Never does one foursome battle the other. Observe how he distributes the music, dividing the players into various small contingents playing with or against each other. Notice how passages in the lightning-quick *Scherzo*, for example, sweep across the ensemble and back again, as fingers and bows fly about non-stop.

The opening *Allegro* (marked *con fuoco*—with fire) dominates the Octet, taking up nearly half the work. Right out of the gate, it creates a fresh fabric of sound, led by the first violin (likely intended for the birthday boy, Reitz). The dreamy *Andante* then brings much-needed serenity and an island of quiet sadness.

If the following *Scherzo* sounds like something out of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, there’s a possible explanation for that. According to Felix’s sister Fanny, it was inspired by the final quatrain of the *Walpurgisnacht* scene from Goethe’s *Faust*: “Clouds go by and mists recede/Bathed

in the dawn and blended/Sighs the wind in leaf and reed/And all our tale is ended.” This episode was describing “the Golden Wedding of Oberon and Titania,” key players, it should be noted, in Shakespeare’s play. As Fanny accurately described this music, “One feels so near the world of spirits, carried away in the air, half inclined to snatch up a broomstick and follow the aerial procession. At the end the first violin takes flight with feather-like lightness, and—all has vanished.”

The fugal *Presto* serves as a salute to the counterpoint tradition of Handel and Bach. Follow those flying fingers as the finale begins with a fast, low-to-high tour of the ensemble. Such bubbly music offers a fitting end to a work that became a calling card for this youthful, stunningly original talent, so full of promise.

## About the performers

Recent winner of the Gramophone Classical Music Awards 2021 chamber category, the world-renowned **Takács Quartet** is now entering its 47th season. Edward Dusinberre, Harumi Rhodes (violins); Richard O’Neill (viola); and András Fejér (cello) are excited to bring to fruition several innovative projects for the 2021-22 season. With bandoneon/accordion virtuoso Julien Labro, the group will perform new works composed for them by Clarice Assad and Bryce Dessner throughout the U.S. This season also marks the world premiere of a new quartet written for the Takács by Stephen Hough, *Les Six Rencontres*. The Takács will record this extraordinary work for Hyperion Records, in combination with quartets by Ravel and Dutilleux.

During the last year, the Takács marked the arrival of Grammy-winning violist Richard O’Neill by making two new recordings for Hyperion. Quartets by Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel and Felix Mendelssohn were released in the Fall of 2021, to be followed in May 2022 by a disc of Haydn’s Opp. 42, 77 and 103.

The Takács Quartet continues its role in 2021-22 as associate artists at London’s Wigmore Hall, performing four concerts there this season. In addition to many concerts in the U.K., the ensemble will play at prestigious European venues including the Paris Philharmonie, Berlin Konzerthaus, and Teatro Della Pergola, Florence. The Takács will

perform throughout North America, including concerts in New York, Boston, Washington, Princeton, Ann Arbor, Berkeley, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Vancouver, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Cleveland and Portland.

The Takács records for Hyperion Records. The ensemble recently won a Gramophone Classical Music Award 2021 in the chamber category for their recording of quintets by Amy Beach and Elgar with pianist Garrick Ohlsson. The CD also won a Presto Classical Recording of the Year. Other discs for Hyperion include string quartets by Haydn, Schubert, Janáček, Smetana, Debussy and Britten, as well as piano quintets by César Franck and Shostakovich (with Marc-André Hamelin), viola quintets by Brahms and Dvorák (with Lawrence Power). For their CDs on the Decca/London label, the Quartet has won three Gramophone Awards, a Grammy Award, three Japanese Record Academy Awards, Disc of the Year at the inaugural BBC Music Magazine Awards, and Ensemble Album of the Year at the Classical Brits. Full details of all recordings can be found at [takacsquartet.com/recordings](http://takacsquartet.com/recordings).

In 2014 the Takács became the first string quartet to be awarded the Wigmore Hall Medal. The Medal, inaugurated in 2007, recognizes major international artists who have a strong association with the Hall. Recipients include Andras Schiff, Thomas Quasthoff, Menahem Pressler and Dame Felicity Lott. In 2012, Gramophone announced that the Takács was the first string quartet to be inducted into its 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 Takács Quartet is known for innovative programming. The ensemble performed a program inspired by Philip Roth's novel *Everyman* with Meryl Streep at Princeton in 2014, and again with her at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto in 2015. They first performed *Everyman* at Carnegie Hall in 2007 with Philip Seymour Hoffman. They have toured 14 cities with the poet Robert Pinsky, 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.

Based in Boulder at the University of Colorado, the members of the Takács Quartet are Christoffersen Faculty Fellows. 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 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, 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.

#### David Korevaar

Hailed for his "wonderfully warm, pliant, spontaneous playing" by the Washington Post, award-winning pianist David Korevaar is in demand as a soloist, chamber musician and collaborator. Korevaar has performed and given master classes throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, and Central and South America. Recent highlights include recitals and master classes in Taipei, and a tour of Brazil, with recitals and master classes in São Paulo, Porto Alegre, Rio de Janeiro, João Pessoa, Recife and Natal. He has also concertized and given master classes in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan as part of the U.S. State Department's Cultural Envoy program and taught at the Afghanistan National Institute of Music (ANIM) in Kabul.

Korevaar's active career includes solo performances with the Rochester Philharmonic, Colorado Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Japan's Shonan Chamber Orchestra, Brazil's Goiania Symphony, and with acclaimed conductors Guillermo Figueroa, Per Brevig,

Stanisław Skrowaczewski and Jorge Mester. His performance of John Cage's Concerto for Prepared Piano and Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Paul Zukofsky was praised by the New York Times "as admirably projected in the devoted and lovely performance of David Korevaar." Korevaar was honored to work with Cage to prepare the concerto.

A passionate and committed collaborator, Korevaar is a founding member of the Boulder Piano Quartet, currently in residence at The Academy in Boulder, for which he curates a chamber music series. He performs regularly with the Takács Quartet, and recently appeared with them on the Great Performers Series at New York's Lincoln Center. Korevaar performs and records with distinguished colleagues including the New York Philharmonic Ensembles; violinists Charles Wetherbee, Anne Akiko Myers, Vadim Gluzman, Chee-Yun, Harumi Rhodes, Edward Dusinberre, Emi Ohi Resnick and Philip Quint; violists Geraldine Walther and Matthew Dane; cellists David Requiro and Peter Wyrick; flutists Alexa Still and Christina Jennings; and the Shanghai, Manhattan and Colorado Quartets. He was a founding member of the Prometheus Piano Quartet, and was a long-time member of the Clavier Trio whose artistry was recognized as "exceptional, impressive, fresh and inspired." Korevaar has appeared on some of the country's most distinguished chamber music series at Carnegie Hall, the Library of Congress, Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Phillips Collection, Spivey Hall, the 92nd Street Y, the Gardner Museum, the Krannert Center, the Ordway Theater, Kennedy Center, Davies Symphony Hall and for the La Jolla Chamber Music Society, among others.

Korevaar's most recent addition to his extensive discography of nearly 40 titles is a highly acclaimed disc of world premiere recordings of piano music by the largely forgotten Italian impressionist composer Luigi Perrachio. "Perrachio's works require a pianist with virtuosic technique and an artist's sensitivity for producing a wide spectrum of tone color. David Korevaar is the right pianist for these pieces" wrote American Record Guide. This fall also saw the release of two recordings with violinist Charles Wetherbee, including works by Iranian-American composer Reza Vali issued on MSR, and a Naxos disc

of the three violin sonatas by Russian/German composer Paul Juon. He returns to the recording studio this season to record Richard Danielpour's *The Celestial Circus* for two pianos and three percussionists with pianist Angelina Gadeliya. Other recent releases include the third volume of Lowell Liebermann's piano music, a compelling Chopin recital, and world premiere recordings of music for violin and piano by Hungarian-born Parisian composer Tibor Harsányi with Charles Wetherbee. Korevaar is well known for his Bach recordings, including the Six *Partitas*, *Goldberg Variations*, and the two books of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*—recognized as a Critic's Choice by American Record Guide. Along with recordings of music by Beethoven, Brahms, Fauré and Ravel, he has recorded three discs dedicated to the solo and chamber music of Paul Hindemith, solo piano music by Ernst von Dohnányi, and rarely heard treasures by French composers Louis Aubert and Jean Roger-Ducasse from the University of Colorado's Ricardo Viñes Piano Music Collection. His long association with the American composer Lowell Liebermann has resulted in five recordings to date, including three collections of solo piano music, an album with flutist Alexa Still, and a chamber music compilation with clarinetist Jon Manasse, members of the Boulder Piano Quartet, and baritone Patrick Mason.

Korevaar is dedicated to championing the works of contemporary composers and has performed and recorded works by Lera Auerbach, David Carlson, Robert Xavier Rodriguez, Paul Schonfield, Aaron Jay Kernis, George Rochberg, George Crumb, Stephen Jaffe, and performed the New York premiere of *Harrison's Clocks* by Harrison Birtwistle. His long-standing advocacy of the music of Lowell Liebermann led to a recent residency by the composer at the University of Colorado. He regularly performs works by University of Colorado colleagues Michael Theodore, Mike Barnett and Carter Pann, as well as works by aspiring and established composers in his mission to inspire future generations.

Balancing an active performing schedule along with teaching at the University of Colorado Boulder, Korevaar is a Distinguished Professor, only the second to bear that title in the College of Music, and holds the Peter and Helen Weil fellowship in piano. He was also honored by the University in 2016 as a Distinguished Research

Lecturer, a first in the College of Music.

In addition to being a gifted pianist, Korevaar, who studied composition with David Diamond, has composed works for solo piano, chamber ensemble, and a piano concerto for full or chamber orchestra. His transcriptions of Franz Liszt's Symphonic Poems *Festklänge* and *Orpheus* can be heard on Helicon Classical's release of Liszt's *Orchestral Transcriptions for Solo Piano* with Korevaar at the piano.

Highlights of Korevaar's media credits include appearances on *All Things Considered*, *Morning Edition*, NPR, *Performance Today*, St. Paul Sunday, WQXR, WDAV, TPR, KFAC, WGBH, WNYC and Colorado Public Radio.

Korevaar's honors include the Richard French award from the Juilliard School, honoring his doctoral document on Ravel's *Miroirs*, top prizes from the University of Maryland William Kapell International Piano Competition and the Peabody-Mason Foundation, as well as the prize for best performance of French music at the Robert Casadesus International Competition. He was also a winner of Young Concert Artists as a member of the group Hexagon.

David Korevaar began piano studies at age six in San Diego, California, with Sherman Storr—an alumnus and former faculty member of the CU College of Music. At age 13 he became a student of the great American virtuoso Earl Wild. By age 20 he had earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from the Juilliard School, where he continued his studies with Earl Wild. He completed his Doctor of Musical Arts at the Juilliard School as a student of Abbey Simon. A very important mentor and teacher was French pianist Paul Doguereau, who had been a student of Egon Petri, and studied the music of Fauré and Debussy with Fauré's student Roger-Ducasse, and the music of Ravel with the composer.

Prior to joining the faculty of the University of Colorado in 2000, Korevaar taught at the Westport School of Music in Connecticut as Artist-Teacher. He is a Shigeru Kawai artist. When not performing and teaching David enjoys reading, as well as running and hiking in the Colorado mountains. [davidkorevaar.com](http://davidkorevaar.com)

### Ivalas Quartet

Composed of violinists Reuben Kebede and Tiani Butts, violist Aimée McAnulty and cellist Pedro Sánchez, the Ivalas Quartet has been changing the face of classical music since its inception at the University of Michigan in 2016. Dedicated to the celebration of BIPOC voices, Ivalas seeks to disrupt the classical music world by introducing more audiences to BIPOC composers, including Jessie Montgomery, Daniel Bernard Roumain, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and Eleanor Alberga. The Ivalas Quartet had the pleasure of performing George Walker's *Lyric for Strings* at their debut at Carnegie Hall in January of 2020. Later that year, they worked in collaboration with Walker's son to program his *String Quartet No. 1* with Friends of Chamber Music Denver and the Colorado Music Festival. In 2021, they created the first recording of Carlos Simon's *Warmth of Other Suns* for string quartet under Lara Downes' digital label Rising Sun Music.

The Ivalas Quartet is currently the graduate quartet in residence at the University of Colorado Boulder where they study under the renowned Takács Quartet. During the summer seasons, Ivalas has worked with the Ying Quartet at the Bowdoin International Music Festival in 2018 and the Pacifica Quartet, American Quartet and Escher Quartet at the Aspen Music Festival in 2019. Ivalas has also spent the past three summers at the Great Lakes Music Festival working with the Emerson Quartet and had the opportunity to perform Mendelssohn's *String Quintet No. 2* in concert with Eugene Drucker in 2019. The quartet has additionally been coached by Peter Oundjian, Paul Katz, Ayano Ninomiya, Masumi Rostad, Kirsten Docter, Jeffrey Zeigler, Danielle Belen, Richard Aaron, Kathryn Votapek and Mikhail Kopelman, and worked with composers Samuel Adler, Carlos Simon and Missy Mazzoli.

Ivalas has performed in various concert series, including Detroit's WRCJ Classical Brunch, the inaugural Detroit Music Weekend, the Crested Butte Music Festival, the Great Lakes Center for the Arts, and the CU Presents concert series, where the quartet performed alongside the Takács Quartet in 2020. Winners of the 2019 WDAV Young Artist Chamber Music Competition in Davidson, North Carolina, the Ivalas Quartet returned to perform in the Davidson College concert series in February 2022. Upcoming performances in

the spring of 2022 include playing in the series Community Concerts at 2nd in Baltimore, Maryland.

The members of the Ivalas Quartet have a shared dedication to their roles as educators. Through the Sphinx Organization, Ivalas has presented educational programming in the Metro Detroit area, with an emphasis on community engagement in schools with Black and Latinx communities. In Colorado, they have developed a partnership with El Sistema Colorado and have been a part of the Aspen Music Festival Musical Connections program. The quartet has also been in residence at the University of Northern Iowa in early 2020, and more recently at the University of Central Arkansas in the fall of 2021.

Ivalas would like to extend a special thank you to the Takács Society, the Starling Foundation and to the University of Colorado Boulder.



TAKÁCS  
QUARTET

## Ivalas Quartet

Performing in the 2022-23 CU Presents season

Sunday, Nov. 6, 4 p.m.

Monday, Nov. 7, 7:30 p.m.

Grusin Music Hall

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