

CU ★ PRESENTS

2020-21 Season
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CU ★ PRESENTS is the home of performing arts at the University of Colorado Boulder.



The Grammy Award-winning **Takács Quartet** has been moving audiences and selling out concerts for three decades at CU Boulder.

As we gather, we honor and acknowledge that the University of Colorado's four campuses are on the traditional territories and ancestral homelands of the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Ute, Apache, Comanche, Kiowa, Lakota, Pueblo and Shoshone Nations. Further, we acknowledge the 48 contemporary tribal nations historically tied to the lands that comprise what is now called Colorado.

Acknowledging that we live in the homelands of Indigenous peoples recognizes the original stewards of these lands and their legacies. With this land acknowledgment, we celebrate the many contributions of Native peoples to the fields of medicine, mathematics, government and military service, arts, literature, engineering and more. We also recognize the sophisticated and intricate knowledge systems Indigenous peoples have developed in relationship to their lands.

We recognize and affirm the ties these nations have to their traditional homelands and the many Indigenous people who thrive in this place, alive and strong. We also acknowledge the painful history of ill treatment and forced removal that has had a profoundly negative impact on Native nations.

We respect the many diverse Indigenous peoples still connected to this land. We honor them and thank the Indigenous ancestors of this place. The University of Colorado pledges to provide educational opportunities for Native students, faculty and staff and advance our mission to understand the history and contemporary lives of Native peoples.

Pandemic Players: **A Peek Behind the Masks**

By Becca Vaclavik

As the United States rounds out a full year of pandemic living, so CU Presents rounds out a year without its vibrant in-person events. Since last March, departments and artists across campus have spent the season finding new and innovative ways to connect with our audiences. One such group is the Takács Quartet, whose members have streamed its concert series directly into the homes of beloved audience members since September.

“We are so grateful for the willingness of the members of the Takács Quartet to partner with our terrific College of Music faculty and staff in the production of streamed performances during this past year while we haven’t been able to present concerts in public,” says College of Music Dean John Davis. “It is our hope that these events have brought joy and enrichment to the lives of our community supporters during these challenging times.”

From the renegotiation of contracts with outside venues, to the in-person audio and visual work of

the College of Music Operations team, to customer communications from CU Presents, moving the season online has been no small feat. It has been an unusual season inside the culture of the quartet, too.

Following violist **Geraldine Walther's retirement**, **Richard O'Neill joined the quartet** during the early days of Boulder County's COVID-19 response. He stayed with fellow Takács members. The group lived a very closed life, becoming each other's "pandemic pod," so they could safely rehearse together in-person in their homes. And over the summer they recorded a new album for Hyperion Records at the Lone Tree Arts Center, south of Denver.

"There is a very obsessive quality that comes with recording—many hours a day of playing to the best of your ability and hoping never to lose focus," says violinist Harumi Rhodes. "It was an intense bonding experience for us, especially with concert life so up in the air these days. The recording was a wonderful project for us to grow together in our new quartet formation."

Slowly, as the Boulder community settled into its new normal, the quartet returned to Grusin Hall and

other local venues, usually performing via streaming services and always while wearing masks. Though they have certainly hit their stride with the new format, Rhodes confesses they hope to return to the old way of performing again soon.

“We have been very fortunate these past months, remaining safe and healthy and having the support of our friends and family in Boulder. Now, we are mostly trying to be patient but it is difficult. We can’t wait to be backstage again in Grusin Hall and hear the expectant buzz of our CU audience chatting before a concert.

“There is already an ephemeral nature to music, and that quality seems particularly present to us right now. When we perform our CU streamed concerts this spring, we will imagine our loyal CU audience listening from home.”

*“During this time we are especially grateful to the CU community as a whole and especially to our friends and colleagues in the String Department. With demands on financial resources stretched thin by the pandemic, we have decided to set up a new fund. The quartet will be making an initial gift of \$13,000 to the new **CU**ltivate Undergraduate String Scholarship Fund. This fund is not intended to benefit specifically our own students, but rather to support the continued excellence of the String Department as a whole. We feel that the future is bright for undergraduate music students despite these challenging times: We hope that others may be inspired to join us in celebrating their beautiful potential!” —Harumi Rhodes*

*“We look forward to presenting both Takács Quartet and Faculty Tuesdays recitals in person in the near future! We thank the members of the Takács Quartet for their generosity and support of our undergraduate string students through their founding of the **CU**ltivate Undergraduate String Scholarship Fund,” — Dean John Davis*

Jupiter String Quartet

Wiancko and Schubert

Virtual performance streaming March 7-15, 2021

To Unpathed Waters, Undreamed Shores

Michi Wiancko

Movement 1: Pelagic Within

Our journey begins on the water, as we travel from shoreline to open sea.

Movement 2: Dream of the Xerces Blue

Dedicated to the magic of pollinators, and specifically to the gossamer-winged butterfly, Xerces Blue, which became extinct after loss of its coastal sand dune habitat in San Francisco's Sunset District. It was last spotted in the Bay area in 1943.

Movement 3: Central Park Microbial

A tribute to the microbiome of the soil beneath New York City's Central Park, discovered only in recent years to be shockingly diverse and resilient. The vast majority of the park's microbes have yet to be studied or even named.

Movement 4: Invisible Eviction

The world is on fire.

Movement 5: Crying, Together

A song of mourning dedicated to our most vulnerable populations.

Movement 6: Follow the Water

A return to the ocean and the rivers that flow into it.

Movement 7: Rise Up

A celebration, a call to action and a meditation on our collective humanity.

String Quartet No. 14 in D minor, “Death and the Maiden”

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

I. Allegro

II. Andante con moto

III. Scherzo. Allegro molto — Trio

IV. Presto — Prestissimo

To Unpathed Waters, Undreamed Shores was written for the Jupiter Quartet, and commissioned by Bay Chamber Concerts in celebration of the organization’s 60th anniversary, in partnership with the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts/University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Program notes

By Marc Shulgold

To Unpathed Waters, Undreamed Shores

Michi Wiancko

A native of Southern California who currently resides in the northeast, Wiancko is a violinist and composer with degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music and Juilliard. *Unpathed Waters* was written for the Jupiter Quartet and premiered in summer 2020, commissioned in part by the Maine-based Bay Chamber Concerts. Its title and the subtitles of its seven movements indicate a dedication to the natural world.

She said in a recent phone conversation: “I had landscapes in mind here, to make the piece a meditation on climate change. I imagined the touch of sunlight in a forest—and then I tried to inhabit that sound. I thought about the visual element and worked to evoke a sense of time and place.”

Wiancko and the Jupiter Quartet have been friends since their student days at the Cleveland Institute, a relationship that figured prominently in the

creation of *Unpathed Waters, Undreamed Shores* (the title is drawn from a line spoken by Camillo in Shakespeare’s *A Winter’s Tale*). “I did a lot of brainstorming with the Jupiters. We talked about what kind of space we wanted the piece to occupy, and how to acknowledge the urgency and struggle that exists around climate change, while also conveying a sense of hope and celebration.”

Writing the piece entailed plenty of work, she said. “Composition is a difficult process—but it’s a beautiful difficulty.” Whatever the thoughts generated by all that visualization, “the music comes first,” she stressed, adding that she had written “dozens of sketches” as the work came together. The score calls for some non-musical effects, such as tapping on the wood of the instruments or strumming the strings with a credit card. Its structure of seven movements was her idea, Wiancko said, noting that this similarity with Beethoven’s Op. 131 Quartet was coincidental.

In her notes on the 22-minute piece, Wiancko wrote: “*To Unpathed Waters, Undreamed Shores*, a multi-movement work for string quartet, celebrates the beauty and vitality of the natural world, suggesting

hope and inspiration as humanity addresses fears and worries for our planet. The central themes of regeneration and resilience highlight the need to help protect each other and our most vulnerable populations.”

String Quartet No. 14 in D minor, “Death and the Maiden”

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

For much of his tragically short life, Schubert was obsessed with death. In later years, this preoccupation intensified due to his unending suffering from the syphilis he apparently contracted in 1822 or 1823. In March 1824, he wrote to a friend, “I feel myself to be the most unhappy and wretched creature in the world ... Each night I go to bed hoping never to wake again.” That same year witnessed the completion of two inescapably dark chamber works: the String Quartets Nos. 13 in A minor and 14, the latter known as *Death and the Maiden*—drawn from *Der Tod und das Mädchen*, a chilling little poem by Matthias Claudius (1740-1815).

Schubert’s song-setting, published in 1817, seems prophetic, given the devastating illness that later

spread through his body. The song's haunting, long-short-short piano chords would return as the basis for the second movement of the 14th quartet. Those ominous chords originally accompanied the opening, as the Maiden pleads with Death:

“Pass me by, ah, pass me by,
Cruel man of bones!
I am still young – go, dear one,
And do not touch me.”

Death responds with reassuring words: “I am a friend and come not to punish.” Those somber piano chords grow from a somber dirge into five increasingly expansive variations in G minor. Those unceasing chords were perhaps inspired by the same rhythmic pulse in the *Allegretto* of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. Other variations focus on the melody, at one point converting it from minor to major.

The work's three other movements remain steadfastly in D minor. The opening *Allegro* explodes out of the gate with isolated chords and climactic build-ups. The stern *Scherzo* reveals a battle between dark and light, while the final *Presto* is a skipping tarantella—albeit a macabre dance

of death. Surprisingly, this masterful piece didn't generate immediate public acceptance. In 1826, the famed violinist (and Beethoven champion) Ignaz Schuppanzigh commented to Schubert on the D-minor quartet: "Brother, this is nothing at all. Let well alone. Stick to your Lieder."

About the performers

The **Jupiter String Quartet** is a particularly intimate group, consisting of violinists Nelson Lee and Meg Freivogel, violist Liz Freivogel (Meg's older sister), and cellist Daniel McDonough (Meg's husband, Liz's brother-in-law). Now enjoying their 20th year together, this tight knit ensemble is firmly established as an important voice in the world of chamber music.

The quartet has performed in some of the world's finest halls, including New York City's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, London's Wigmore Hall, Boston's Jordan Hall, Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes, Washington, D.C.'s Kennedy Center and Library of Congress, Austria's Esterhazy Palace, and Seoul's Sejong Chamber Hall. Their major music festival appearances include the Aspen Music Festival and School, Bowdoin International Music Festival,

Cape Cod Chamber Music Festival, Rockport Music Festival, Music at Menlo, the Seoul Spring Festival, and many others. In addition to their performing career, they have been artists-in-residence at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana since 2012, where they maintain private studios and direct the chamber music program.

Their chamber music honors and awards include the grand prizes in the Banff International String Quartet Competition and the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition; the Young Concert Artists International auditions in New York City; the Cleveland Quartet Award from Chamber Music America; an Avery Fisher Career Grant; and a grant from the Fromm Foundation. From 2007-2010, they were in residence at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Chamber Music Two.

The quartet's latest album is a collaboration with the Jasper String Quartet (Marquis Classics, 2021), produced by Grammy-winner Judith Sherman. This collaborative album features the world premiere recording of Dan Visconti's *Eternal Breath*, Felix Mendelssohn's Octet in E-flat, Op. 20 and Osvaldo Golijov's *Last Round* (1996). The quartet's

discography also includes numerous recordings on labels including Azica Records and Deutsche Grammophon.

The Jupiter Quartet remains strongly committed to making music during these challenging times. In July 2020, the Jupiter Quartet gave the world premiere of Michi Wiancko's *To Unpathed Waters, Undreamed Shores*, which was commissioned for the ensemble and presented via livestream by Bay Chamber Concerts. Other recent and upcoming livestream concerts include performances presented by Bowdoin International Music Festival, Asheville Chamber Music Series, Arizona Friends of Chamber Music and UCLA Chamber Music at the Clark, as well as virtual residencies with the University of Iowa and Middlebury College.

The quartet chose its name because Jupiter was the most prominent planet in the night sky at the time of its formation and the astrological symbol for Jupiter resembles the number four.

For more information, **[visit jupiterquartet.com](http://jupiterquartet.com)**.



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January-March 2021

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