



TAKÁCS  
QUARTET

# TAKÁCS QUARTET

April 29–30, 2018

CU ★ PRESENTS

# Program

**String Quartet in D Major, Opus 76, No. 5**

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

- I. Allegretto
- II. Largo. Cantabile e mesto
- III. Menuetto. Allegro
- IV. Finale. Presto

**“Langsamer Satz” in E-flat Major (1905)**

Anton Webern (1883–1945)

## INTERMISSION

**String Sextet in D minor, “Souvenir de Florence,” Op. 70**

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

- I. Allegro con spirito
- II. Adagio cantabile e con moto
- III. Allegretto moderato
- IV. Allegro con brio e vivace

*Harumi Rhodes, second violin*

*Erika Eckert, viola*

*David Requiro, violoncello*

# Program Notes

Notes by Marc Shulgold

## STRING QUARTET IN D MAJOR, OPUS 76, NO. 5

Time was that turning 65 meant retirement—a life of hard labor replaced by quiet days of leisure. Not so for many folks these days, and certainly not true for Haydn, when he reached his “golden years.” No, he was still an active composer in 1797, fresh off his second triumphant residence in London. He had written 104 symphonies and nearly 60 string quartets, and though he was done with the former, there was still work to be done with the latter, thanks to a commission by the Hungarian Count Joseph Georg von Erdödy (1754-1824). What resulted was Opus 76, a set of six completed during Haydn’s 65th year, soon to include some of his most performed and admired chamber pieces. Only a few more string quartets would follow (the two of Opus 77 and the unfinished Opus 103). It’s well known that Haydn—and his dear colleague Mozart—had already refined and elevated the genre from pleasant amusement for aristocrats to high art for all of humanity. With that in mind, one might expect the late quartets of Opus 76 to reveal a sense of completeness and self-satisfaction. Not a chance. Though he had accomplished so much with his five dozen quartets, Haydn knew that the possibilities of music emerging from four string instruments remained infinite—a potential that his restless young student Beethoven would soon discover. The fifth of Opus 76’s half-dozen shows that Haydn was still experimenting, still uncovering new ideas. The first movement of the D Major demonstrates this in living color, revealing no desire to follow the predictable *sonata-allegro* form (built on an introduction of two contrasting ideas leading to an exploration of those ideas, followed by a reprise of the opening themes). Instead, the *Allegretto* combines hints of that form, while unfolding with a theme-and-variations feel that uncharacteristically alternates between D Major and D minor. So much for sitting pat. One would be hard-pressed to find lovelier, more personal music than the sweet *Largo cantabile e mesto*—a revealing description that calls for song-like playing with a touch of melancholy. Nothing mournful, just a quiet reflection on a long life well-lived. It’s a simple tune with a pleasant chord progression, written in F-sharp, a not-so-simple key signature for string-players, sporting six sharps. Here is Haydn demonstrating his masterful less-is-more approach. A jolly little *Minuet* follows, leading to one of the composer’s most amusing finales, a *Presto* that begins with a startling, delicious joke: a “finale” of concluding chords (yes, they do re-appear at the end) that launches a dizzying parade of twists and turns and surprises reminiscent of a joyous roller-coaster ride.

## “LANGSAMER SATZ” IN E-FLAT MAJOR

The three leaders of the so-called Second Viennese School have suffered a bad reputation over the years. Arnold Schoenberg and his prized students Alban Berg and Anton Webern are pictured by many as grim, heartless men who were enemies of beauty and joy, creating impenetrable music that proudly eschewed harmony and hummable tunes. But these men were, after all, human. Schoenberg became a jovial tennis partner of Gershwin, grinning widely in home movies shot at Gershwin’s Beverly Hills home. And Webern? His later pieces may have been sparse and difficult to fathom, but know this: he was once young and in love, expressing his feelings in sugary sweet words and in a work of equally romantic music. That piece is the “Langsamer Satz” (slow movement), a piece that will surprise those who dread hearing his compositions. And who was the object of his affection? Wilhelmine Mörtl, 16, a young lady the 18-year-old Webern had met and fallen in love with in 1902—and who happened to be his cousin (and later became his wife). In 1905, they spent an idyllic Easter holiday at Waldwinkel, a forested region west of Vienna. Here’s Webern recalling the trip: “My heart was jubilant. ... When night fell, the skies shed bitter tears, but I wandered with her along a road. ... Our love rose to infinite heights and filled the universe! Two souls were enraptured. ... It was a fairyland!” The music Webern would write two months afterward captured his overflowing joy and showed no signs of the cerebral compositional technique he would later embrace (he’d begun his studies with Schoenberg the previous year). In its nine or so minutes, this movement presents one lovely little melody after another, beginning with a sweet tune that becomes the core of what follows. Melodies are shared by all four voices, each episode emerging with nothing short of old-fashioned ardor. It’s reminiscent of Schoenberg’s earlier, equally sumptuous “Verklärte Nacht.” As surprising as this thoroughly tonal music sounds (considering its author), even more unexpected is the story behind its premiere. This music remained unperformed until nearly two decades after Webern’s tragic death (accidentally shot by an American soldier in September, 1945). Ignored as merely one of 50 or so pieces of

# Program Notes

juvenilia, the “Langsamer Satz” finally saw the light of day on May 27, 1962, premiered by the University of Washington String Quartet at the first International Webern Festival. That event was organized by respected Webern biographer Hans Moldenhauer, who had settled in Spokane in 1939 and would direct five more festivals over the next 16 years. Let’s hope that this fragrant music warmed listeners’ hearts at that premiere, just as the composer’s nocturnal walk in the woods had inspired this intimate music, decades earlier. Recalling that stroll with his future wife, Webern quoted from a poem he’d earlier set to music, penned by Detlev von Liliencron: “What the night gave to me will long make me tremble.”

## **STRING SEXTET IN D MINOR, “SOUVENIR DE FLORENCE,” OP. 70**

Few of us can resist the warmth and sunshine of Italy—and Tchaikovsky was no exception. He was particularly fond of Florence, where he vacationed eight times between 1874 and 1890 (he also spent time in Rome). One can imagine the composer taking in the gorgeous hilltop views of Florence from the villa at 64 Via San Leonardo he rented in 1878 from his patroness Nadezhda von Meck. One might think that he was instantly inspired to create a love letter to the city that brought him joy and much-needed peace (he’d been trying to shake off the agony of a terrible, short-lived marriage he sought to end in 1878). Alas, nothing of the sort. In fact, unlike the bubbly “Capriccio Italien” from 1879, a pastiche that captured the energetic life of Rome, his string sextet known as the “Souvenir de Florence” seems more Russian than Italian ... and it took years to complete. Though his days in Florence were pleasant enough, the resulting work emerged with great difficulty—a creative process that proved both frustrating and time-consuming. Finally finished in 1890, it would be his last chamber work. The sextet’s long journey began in 1886, when he was awarded an honorary membership in the St. Petersburg Chamber Music Society, leading him to promise a chamber work for the Society. The following year, he decided on a string sextet. That was the easy part. In June, he wrote in his diary, “I jotted down sketches for a string sextet, but with little enthusiasm.” Succeeding years were marked with more expressions of futility. Finally, in June 1890, he earnestly dove into the work—but not without pain. “This is unimaginably difficult,” he wrote his brother Modest. Perhaps he was able to rekindle his love of Florence, where he returned that summer, mostly to work on his opera “Pique Dame.” Or maybe he was able to overcome his lifelong penchant for self-doubt. In any case, the sextet was completed by August 1890, drawing words of excitement from the composer: “It is awful how pleased I am with myself.” It was premiered—after numerous cuts and revisions—on December 6, 1892, at a concert by the St. Petersburg Chamber Music Society. If you listen closely, you might catch a few “Italianate” touches, though there’s nothing like the picture-postcard feel of the “Capriccio Italien.” In fact, the work begins with a muscular melody in D minor that hardly captures the relaxation of a Florence villa. Things open up with a pleasant second tune accompanied by pizzicato plucks. In the lovely *Adagio cantabile e con moto*, more plucked strings support some lovely interplay between violin and cello, interrupted briefly by a wind-swept episode. The confident richness of the scoring belies the reality of Tchaikovsky’s struggles with writing for six separate voices. A lilting *Allegretto moderato* instantly places one in the folk traditions of old Russia—not a hint of Italy. Its bouncy middle section reminds one of Mendelssohn’s feathery light scherzos. The work’s finale, a dizzying *Allegro vivace*, kicks off with another folk-like tune that leads to a new, triumphant melody that could easily have accompanied one of his ballet finales. Then, suddenly, the composer treats us to a grand six-part fugue on the opening theme. Impressive moments abound, particularly a surprising sustained note converged in unison by the entire ensemble. Even Tchaikovsky was impressed: “What a sextet,” he wrote, “and what a great fugue there is at the end—a real delight.”



## FOUNDING TAKÁCS QUARTET VIOLINIST SCHRANZ TO RETIRE

After a distinguished career spanning more than 40 years, founding second violinist of the Takács Quartet **Károly Schranz** will retire from the Grammy-winning chamber ensemble effective May 1, 2018. CU Boulder Assistant Professor of Violin **Harumi Rhodes** has been appointed the new second violinist. “Károly brought extraordinary abilities to the group,” said the members of the quartet. “We were all inspired by his lively, characterful playing and imaginative approach to music.”

The other members of the quartet are Edward Dusinberre, first violin; Geraldine Walther, viola, and András Fejér, cello. “Individually, I have learned a huge amount from Károly and will always be profoundly grateful for the support he gave me after I joined the quartet,” Dusinberre said.

Schranz came to Boulder in 1986 when he and the other original members of the quartet, Gábor Takács Nagy, Gábor Ormai and Fejér, became artists-in-residence at the College of Music. In addition to a prolific international performance career, the group has developed a deep connection with the College of Music and the Boulder community, performing in a regularly sold-out concert series and helping guide future musicians through the college’s Graduate Quartet Program. “How proud we are to be able to call the members of the Takács Quartet colleagues and friends,” said CU College of Music Dean Robert Shay. “They’ve contributed in so many ways beyond their highly popular concert series, steadily guiding students toward bigger and better things.”

Schranz has received awards from the Hungarian Government of the Knight’s Cross and the Commander’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary. As a member of the Takács Quartet, he was awarded one Grammy and four nominations, several Gramophone Awards, as well as other awards of excellence. In 2012, the ensemble became the first associate artists of the Wigmore Hall, receiving the Wigmore’s prestigious

Gold Medal in 2014. Schranz plans to continue an active career as a chamber musician and teacher.

The members of the Takács Quartet are delighted to welcome Harumi Rhodes as their new second violinist. “We are thrilled that Harumi has accepted our invitation to join the quartet,” the members of the quartet said. “She is a wonderfully versatile violinist and chamber musician, and we greatly look forward to working with her.” As colleagues at the University of Colorado, the members of the Takács have had many opportunities to play with Rhodes in different combinations. In the summer of 2016, she performed with the quartet at the Ravinia Festival and for Austin Chamber Music.

“Immersing myself in a life of string quartet playing is a dream come true,” Rhodes said. “I have been a fan of the Takács Quartet for as long as I can remember. It is with great excitement that I join Ed, Geri, and András in taking the quartet’s vision into the future.”

Rhodes has been at the College of Music since 2015. Before that, she served as head of strings and chamber music at Syracuse University and assistant violin faculty at the Juilliard School. An avid supporter of contemporary music, Rhodes has been actively involved in commissioning and premiering new works. “It’s a significant testament to the strength of our faculty that the quartet looked to one of our own in seeking Károly’s replacement,” Shay said. “Harumi has displayed such tremendous talent and thoughtfulness in her solo and chamber performances, while establishing herself as a profoundly committed teacher.”

Rhodes will join the quartet for the second half of its Boulder concerts on April 29 and 30, performing Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s “Souvenir de Florence” with CU Boulder colleagues Erika Eckert and David Requiro. She will be fulfilling all of the quartet’s engagements from then onwards.



# Biographies

The **Takács Quartet**, now in its 43rd season, is renowned for the vitality of its interpretations. The New York Times recently lauded the ensemble for “revealing the familiar as unfamiliar, making the most traditional of works feel radical once more,” and the Financial Times described a recent concert at Wigmore Hall: “Even in the most fiendish repertoire these players show no fear, injecting the music with a heady sense of freedom. At the same time, though, there is an uncompromising attention to detail: neither a note nor a bow-hair is out of place.” Based in Boulder at the University of Colorado, the Takács Quartet performs 80 concerts a year worldwide.

In Europe during the 2017–2018 season, in addition to its four annual appearances as Associate Artists at London’s Wigmore Hall, the ensemble returns to Copenhagen, Vienna, Luxembourg, Rotterdam, the Rheingau Festival and the Edinburgh Festival. They perform twice at Carnegie Hall, presenting a new Carl Vine work commissioned for them by Musica Viva Australia, Carnegie Hall and the Seattle Commissioning Club. In 2017, the ensemble joined the summer faculty at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara. They will return to New Zealand and Australia, and they will perform at Tanglewood with pianist Garrick Ohlsson, at the Aspen Festival and in more than 40 other concerts in prestigious North American venues. They will also tour with pianist Marc-André Hamelin. The latest Takács recording, to be released by Hyperion in September 2017, features Dvořák’s viola quintet, Op. 97 (with Lawrence Power) and String Quartet, Op. 105.

The Takács Quartet’s releases with Hyperion Records 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), and viola quintets by Brahms (with Lawrence Power). Future releases for Hyperion include the Dvořák disc with Lawrence Power, the Dohnányi Piano Quintets with Marc-André Hamelin, and piano quintets by Elgar and Amy Beach with Garrick Ohlsson. 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 and play on instruments generously loaned to them by a family foundation. The Quartet has helped develop a string program at CU with a special emphasis on chamber music, where students work in a nurturing environment designed to help them develop their

artistry. The Takács is a Visiting Quartet at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, 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. Károly Schranz announced his retirement from the Takács Quartet as of April 30th, 2018, and he will be replaced by violinist Harumi Rhodes. 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.

Acclaimed by the New York Times as a “deeply expressive violinist,” **Harumi Rhodes** has gained broad recognition as a multifaceted musician with a distinct and sincere musical voice. Her generosity of spirit on stage is contagious, making her one of the most sought after violinists and chamber musicians of her generation.

As a founding member of the Naumburg Award-winning ensemble, Trio Cavatina, Rhodes has performed at the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, Pittsburgh Chamber Music Society, Wolf Trap and San Francisco performances, as well as its debut at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall in 2009. Continuing to build its reputation as one of today’s leading piano trios, Trio Cavatina has been touring internationally over the last few seasons with recent notable performances in Pablo Casals Symphony Hall in San Juan, Puerto Rico and Filharmonija Hall in Vilnius, Lithuania.

As a chamber musician, Rhodes has been a participant at the Marlboro Music Festival and has performed on several Musicians From Marlboro tours as well as at the festivals of Seattle Chamber Music, Bard, Caramoor, Bridgehampton, Moab, Music in the Vineyards, Mainly Mozart, and the Saito Kinen Festival in Japan. After completing her residency with Lincoln Center’s Chamber Music Society Two, Ms. Rhodes was appointed as an Artist Member of the Boston Chamber Music Society where she performs regularly

at Sanders Theater at Harvard University and Kresge Hall at MIT.

An avid supporter of contemporary music, Rhodes is a frequent guest artist with Music from Copland House, and has recorded Milton Babbitt's Sixth String Quartet on John Zorn's Tzadik label. Deeply committed to the process of commissioning and premiering new music, Rhodes has collaborated with many composers including Richard Danielpour, Leon Kirchner, Benjamin Lees, Pierre Jalbert, Paul Moravec, William Bolcom, Gabriela Lena Frank, David Ludwig and Lisa Bielawa.

Recent solo engagements have included performances of Bernstein's Serenade, Beethoven's Violin Concerto, Lou Harrison's Concerto for Violin and Percussion, Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 3 and No. 5, Beethoven Romances, and Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" with the Vermont Mozart Festival Orchestra and the New York Chamber Soloists Orchestra. Rhodes is also a member of the East Coast Chamber Orchestra (ECCO), a conductor-less chamber orchestra made up of world-class chamber musicians and soloists.

A graduate of The Juilliard School and the New England Conservatory, her principal teachers have been Shirley Givens, Earl Carlyss, Ronald Copes and Donald Weilerstein. Rhodes has served as head of strings and chamber music at Syracuse University, as well as Assistant violin faculty at the Juilliard School. Most recently, Rhodes was appointed assistant professor of violin at the University of Colorado Boulder in the fall of 2015.

First Prize winner of the 2008 Naumburg International Violoncello Competition, **David Requiro** has emerged as one of today's finest American cellists. After winning First Prize in both the Washington International and Irving M. Klein International String Competitions, he also captured a top prize at the Gaspar Cassadó International Violoncello Competition in Hachioji, Japan, coupled with the prize for the best performances of works by Cassadó.

Mr. Requiro has appeared as soloist with the Tokyo Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, and numerous orchestras across North America. His Carnegie Hall debut recital at Weill Hall was followed by a critically acclaimed San Francisco Performances recital at the Herbst Theatre. Soon after making his Kennedy Center debut, Mr. Requiro also completed the cycle of Beethoven's Sonatas for Piano and Cello at the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C. Actively involved in contemporary music, he has collaborated with many composers, including Krzysztof Penderecki and Bright Sheng, and gave the Dutch premiere of Pierre Jalbert's Sonata for Cello and Piano at the 2010 Amsterdam Cello Biennale. Mr. Requiro has performed with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Seattle Chamber Music Society and Jupiter Symphony Chamber Players, and

is a founding member of the Baumer String Quartet. The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center recently appointed Mr. Requiro to its prestigious CMS Two residency beginning in 2018.

In 2015, Mr. Requiro was appointed Assistant Professor at the University of Colorado Boulder and has previously served as artist in residence at the University of Puget Sound as well as guest lecturer at the University of Michigan. His artist faculty appointments include the Bowdoin International Music Festival, Giverny Chamber Music Festival, Innsbrook Music Festival and Institute, Maui Classical Music Festival and Olympic Music Festival.

**Erika Eckert**, zssociate professor of viola at the University of Colorado Boulder and summer faculty member at Brevard Music Center in North Carolina, has also served on the faculties of The Cleveland Institute of Music and Chautauqua Institution in New York. As a member of the Eckert-McDonald Duo, she has performed recitals in Alabama, California, Colorado, Minnesota, Ohio and Tennessee. Last season, the duo performed in Cremona, Italy at the International Viola Congress and at Palazzo Tornabuoni in Florence and presented a recital and master classes at the Johann Sebastian Bach Musikschule in Vienna. The duo has presented Colorado premieres of works by Richard Toensing, Carter Pann, Daniel Kellogg, Chen Yi, Libby Larsen and Peter Seabourne and can be heard on the Meridian Label performing Luis Jorge González's "Sonata Elegiaca". As co-founder of the Cavani Quartet, she performed on major concert series worldwide and garnered an impressive list of awards and prizes, including first prize at the Naumburg Chamber Music Competition.

In recent seasons, Ms. Eckert has performed as guest violist with the Takács Quartet, appearing with them in Canada, California, Colorado, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Oregon and Vermont. She has soloed 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. Other performing engagements include the 400th Galileo Anniversary at the American Academy in Rome, El Paso Pro Musica International Chamber Music Festival, Australian Festival of Chamber Music, Sitka Summer Music Festival and Niagara International Chamber Music Festival. Teaching engagements include the North American Viola Institute in Orford, Canada, ASTA International Workshops in Australia and Norway, Perlman Music Program and Quartet Program. Ms. Eckert also served as adjudicator for the NFAA Arts Recognition and Talent Search, the exclusive nominating agency for the Presidential Scholars in the Arts, and appeared in their Academy Award-nominated documentary, *Rehearsing a Dream*.





ARTIST  
SERIES



# 2018–2019 Season

**Season tickets on sale now!**

Dee Dee Bridgewater • Jessica Lang Dance • Venice Baroque Orchestra (pictured)  
Sarah Chang, violin • Canadian Brass • Silkroad Ensemble • Kodo • Tafelmusik  
Batsheva Dance Company • Dorrance Dance

**303-492-8008 • [cupresents.org](http://cupresents.org)**