

# ONSTAGE

CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS AT PENN STATE



## TAKÁCS QUARTET

UNDERWRITTEN BY THE Norma and Ralph Condee Chamber Music Endowment

**CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS  
AT PENN STATE**

presents

# **Takács Quartet**

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

**7:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 22, 2011  
Schwab Auditorium**

*The concert includes one intermission.*

media sponsor

**WPSU**

The 2010–2011 season of the Center for the Performing Arts is supported, in part, by grants from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

# PROGRAM

## **String Quartet No. 59 in G minor, Op. 74, No.3, Hob. III: 74, *The Rider***

**Franz Joseph Haydn**  
(1732–1809)

*Allegro*

*Largo assai*

*Menuetto: Allegretto*

*Finale: Allegro con brio*

## **String Quartet No. 3**

**Béla Bartók**  
(1881–1945)

*Prima parte: Moderato*

*Seconda parte: Allegro*

*Ricapitulazione della prima parte: Moderato*

*Coda: Allegro molto*

[ INTERMISSION ]

## **String Quartet No. 15 in G Major, D. 887**

**Franz Schubert**  
(1797–1828)

*Allegro molto moderato*

*Andante un poco moto*

*Scherzo: Allegro vivace–Trio: Allegretto*

*Allegro assai*

The Takács Quartet appears by arrangement with Seldy Cramer Artists and records for Hyperion and Decca/London Records.

The Takács Quartet is quartet-in-residence at the University of Colorado in Boulder and its members are associate artists at the South Bank Centre, London.

[www.takacsquartet.com](http://www.takacsquartet.com)

# PROGRAM NOTES

**Haydn:**

**Quartet No. 59 in G minor, Op. 74,  
No. 3, *The Rider***

In 1793, while he was home in Vienna between his two long stays in London, Franz Joseph Haydn composed a set of six string quartets for Count Anton Apponyi, who seems to have governed the huge Hungarian county of Tolna from Vienna, where he was a chamberlain at the Imperial Court. Apponyi was a relative of Haydn's patrons, the Esterhazys, and a member of Baron van Swieten's aristocratic *Musikalische Gesellschaft*. He was the first patron to offer young Ludwig van Beethoven a string quartet commission in 1795, and in 1784, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart named Apponyi's wife as a subscriber to his concerts in Vienna. As was the custom of the time, Haydn gave Apponyi exclusive rights to the six quartets for a year and then in 1795 divided the six into two sets of three that were published by different publishers. Now they are known as Op. 71 and Op. 74.

In these years, Haydn freely dealt with complex musical ideas, endowing them with dynamic expression and form with both ease and facility. Haydn's innovative six quartets, Op. 20, of 1772, were responsible for his being called "the father of the string quartet." As time passed, Haydn continued to enhance the genre, adding symphonic elements to his

quartets. Each quartet has a special introduction of some kind, as have many of Haydn's symphonies, and the ensemble writing takes on an almost orchestral quality.

This quartet carries the subtitle *Rider* or *Horseman* because of some cantering figures in the first movement, *Allegro*, as well as galloping rhythms in the final movement. Karl Geiringer, Haydn's biographer, comments that the beginnings of Romanticism are noticeable in the quartets of Op. 74, noting the experimental nature of the first movements of each of the quartets. He explains that the main subject following the powerful introduction has less importance than the secondary idea of the transitional section, and he says that many romantic compositions of the following century follow this lead, assigning more importance to the second subject than to the first theme. The first theme sounds like an introduction, especially with its two-measure pause at the end of the thematic statement, which functions as a dramatic musical gesture. The grace notes in the first phrase rock the final two beats of each measure, giving the music the sound of a canter on a horse, which is what led to the quartet's nickname. At the end of the movement there is a coda, which takes the ending to a bright major key.

What is remarkable in the Op. 74 quartets is that Haydn is not writing for four individuals, but for the first time, he is composing

for a group. Also, the slow movement in this quartet, *Largo assai*, is exceptional because it has more gravity than the slow movements in quartets that preceded it. It does not begin with a melody for one of the instruments as so many earlier quartets do; instead, it is remarkable for the absence of a soloist accompanied by the other quartet members. This movement, with its increased ensemble character, proceeds in chorale style with grandeur and dramatic lines.

The minuet, *Allegretto*, which follows, contrasts sharply with what has gone before, flowing in a *legato* way, featuring a range of textures, from phrases in two parts to homophonically accompanied melody to active imitation. The trio includes some chromaticism and unexpected melodic turns and phrase lengths.

The beginning of the *Allegro con brio* finale is resolute; the theme is stated over after-beats that have been said to imply galloping. Although the movement seems optimistic, regardless of whether Haydn places it in the major or the minor tonality, he begins with a minor first theme, while the second theme shifts to the major mode as rhythmic gestures move this rather flashier movement ahead. The development breaks up the first theme and disperses it with the galloping after-beats present but not intrusive. There are some powerful pauses, but the recapitulation is normal, taking the work to its major tonality ending.

*All program notes © Susan Halpern, 2010*

### **Bartók: String Quartet No. 3**

In 1905, Béla Bartók began the systematic study of the folk music of his native region of Hungary, an endeavor whose results were to be the central element in his work during the last forty years of his life. In collaboration with the composer Zoltán Kodály, Bartók collected and examined the music of the itinerant gypsies and that of the peasants rooted to the land in an area that stretched from Slovakia to Romania. Until then, this music had been labeled as Hungarian, but Bartók identified the distinguishing characteristics of several different kinds of folk music played and sung in the various specific locales. Soon after, he began to use the collected material in his compositions. He assimilated the styles of this music so thoroughly that it became impossible to tell the authentic folk melodies from the original material in his work. It was a progression, as one biographer has brilliantly said, “from real to imaginary folk music.”

Between 1923 and 1926, Bartók wrote few new works, as if preparing to enter a new phase of composition. The music that he produced after this brief hiatus had recognizable roots in his preceding work, but he now used greater contrapuntal complexity and more extreme concision. String Quartet No. 3, finished in September 1927, is a short, inward-looking work, but its expressive content has been densely compressed. The fundamental musical material of the

quartet does not exist in extended themes but instead in brief musical motives, each consisting of only a few notes. These motives are not melodies, conventional or unconventional, but structural materials, building blocks that Bartók skillfully manipulates and symmetrically assembles into a musical composition. In what was for the time an inventive stroke, Bartók made the unusual instrumental sonorities that he required of the players, using special bowing techniques as a part of the formal elements of the structure rather than as colors to be applied to its surface after the work's creation. The work premiered on February 19, 1929, in London, performed by the Waldbauer-Kerpelt Quartet.

The quartet consists of a single continuous movement in two parts; it is the only single movement work in Bartók's chamber compositions. The parts have a slow-fast alternation characteristic of the Hungarian *czárdás* (and of Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies*). In *Prima Parte* (Part One), *Moderato*, Bartók uses polyphonic techniques for the main subject, treating angular but lyrical material in a freely canonic manner as motives come together and part, agglomerating and separating, forming and reforming into unique musical shapes. In the contrasting idea of this part, Bartók focuses on timbre. In *Seconda Parte* (Part Two), *Alllegro*, he utilizes similar procedures, but the counterpoint here is strictly canonic. Two subjects again appear: the first introduced by the cello with *pizzicato* triple-stopped chords, and the

second a folk-like theme of a non-symmetrical nature. An altered, abbreviated recapitulation of Part One, *Ricapitulazione della Prima Parte*, follows, and then a coda, *Alllegro molto*, that is a recapitulation of the music of Part Two.

**Schubert:**  
**String Quartet No. 15 in G Major,**  
**D. 887**

Schubert's thousand or more compositions are the product of an extraordinarily full life that was somehow condensed into less than thirty-two years. It was only at its end that Vienna's musical society, which still revolved around the aging Beethoven whom Schubert worshipped from afar, became aware of his existence and of his genius. When Schubert died, the poet Franz Grillparzer, who had so eloquently eulogized Beethoven sixteen months earlier, wrote his epitaph: "The art of music has buried a precious possession, but even fairer hopes. Franz Schubert lies here."

Schubert's friends were not members of the great families, noble and wealthy, who for several generations were involved in the Viennese careers of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. They were almost without exception people of his own age, many of them talented, who lived as simply and poorly as he. In the spring of 1826, Schubert and two other young men went off to spend some time in a country village not far from Vienna. The weather was terrible, and his friends' preoccupation with their

unhappy love affairs of the moment bored him. He tried to put together ways to realize his great ambition to write a major opera, but this was not to be. Between June 20 and 30, he composed this great string quartet instead, and having used up all his expensive ruled music paper, he went on in the next few days to write some songs (“Who is Sylvia?” and “Hark, Hark, the Lark” among them) on whatever scraps he could find. Ten days after the quartet was finished, he wrote to a friend, “I have absolutely no money, and things in general are going very badly for me, but I don’t mind and am in good spirits.”

By early 1828, musical Vienna had begun to realize that there was a curious young man of extraordinary gifts in town, and his friends decided that he should give a concert of his works. They arranged for the use of a hall and participation of musicians who had been members of Beethoven’s circle. The first movement of this string quartet was played, and the concert was a huge success with its standing-room-only audience, but the critics paid little attention because they were much more interested at the moment in Paganini, who was also in Vienna. Schubert’s friends wanted to put on a repeat performance, but he used his profits to buy a new piano and immediately lost interest in more concert-giving. There is no record of another performance of this quartet or any part of it until 1850, and it was not published until 1851.

Some German scholars find the origins of the symphonic style of

Anton Bruckner (1824–1896) in this quartet’s heavy, orchestral writing for the strings, in its harmonic restlessness and its somber agitation. Light and dark are seen or heard in its continual major-minor shifts. Idiosyncratic rhythmic features that turn up in his other important late works are particularly prominent here as well.

The first movement, *Allegro molto moderato*, opens with an introductory statement that is almost a piece of powerful prose declamation with an orchestral accompaniment, and the second theme, with its repeated, quirkily off-beat rhythm, persists, as do similar figures in some of the piano sonatas. The structural idea of the second movement, *Andante un poco moto*, is the alternation of serene grace with outbursts of dramatic and passionate agitation. The *Scherzo, Allegro vivace-Trio: Allegretto*, is based on the kind of repeated-note figure that Schubert liked so much, set here in a spectral version of the rhythmic pattern he had used in the *scherzo* of his huge and still relatively unperformed great Symphony in C Major. The quartet finale, *Allegro assai*, is a fiercely whirling tarantella in the form of a rondo, a wild dance whose beat is almost never abandoned through its entire great length.



Left to right: Edward Dusinberre (first violin), András Fejér (cello), Geraldine Walther (violist), and Károly Schranz (second violin).

**R**ecognized as one of the world's great ensembles, the **Takács Quartet** plays with a unique blend of drama, warmth, and humor, combining four distinct musical personalities to bring fresh insights to the string quartet repertoire.

Based at the University of Colorado in Boulder, the quartet performs ninety concerts a year worldwide. The 2010–2011 season includes a Bartók cycle in Sydney and a three-concert series focusing on Schubert in New York City and at The University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. The series features the New York City premiere of a new work composed for the quartet by Daniel Kellogg based on the slow

movement theme of Schubert's *Death and the Maiden* Quartet.

The ensemble's award-winning recordings include the complete Beethoven cycle on the Decca label. In 2005, *Late Beethoven Quartets* won Disc of the Year and Chamber Award from *BBC Music Magazine*, a *Gramophone* Award, and a Japanese Record Academy Award. The quartet's recordings of the early and middle Beethoven quartets won a Grammy, a *Gramophone* Award, a Chamber Music of America Award, and two awards from the Japanese Recording Academy.

In 2006, the quartet recorded its first release for Hyperion Records, Schubert's D. 804 and

D. 810, a disc featuring Brahms' Piano Quintet with Stephen Hough was released to great acclaim in November 2007 and was subsequently nominated for a Grammy. A recording of Brahms' Quartets Op. 51 and Op. 67 were released in 2008, and a disc featuring the Schumann Piano Quintet with Marc-Andre Hamelin was released in 2009. The Haydn "Apponyi" Quartets, Op. 71 and 74, will be released in November 2011.

Since 1988, the quartet has also made sixteen recordings for the Decca label of works by Beethoven, Bartók, Borodin, Brahms, Chausson, Dvořák, Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, and Smetana. The ensemble's recording of the six Bartók string quartets received the 1998 *Gramophone* Award for chamber music and, in 1999, was nominated for a Grammy. In addition to the Beethoven String Quartet cycle recording, the ensemble's other Decca recordings include Dvořák's String Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 51, and Piano Quintet in A Major, Op. 81, with pianist Andreas Haefliger; Schubert's *Trout* Quintet with Haefliger; string quartets by Smetana and Borodin; Schubert's Quartet in G Major and Notturmo Piano Trio with Haefliger; the three Brahms string quartets and Piano Quintet in F minor with pianist András Schiff; Chausson's Concerto for Violin, Piano, and String Quartet with violinist Joshua Bell and pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet; and Mozart's String Quintets, K515 and 516, with Gyorgy Pauk, viola.

In 2007, the quartet performed, with actor Philip Seymour Hoff-

man, "Everyman," inspired by the Philip Roth novel, in Carnegie Hall. The group collaborates with the Hungarian folk ensemble Muzsikás, performing a program that explores the folk sources of Bartók's music. The quartet performed a music and poetry program on a fourteen-city United States tour with poet Robert Pinsky.

At the University of Colorado, the quartet has helped to develop a string program with a special emphasis on chamber music in which students work in a nurturing environment designed to help them develop their artistry. The quartet's commitment to teaching is enhanced by summer residencies. The ensemble is a visiting quartet at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London.

The ensemble was formed in 1975 at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest by Gabor Takács-Nagy, Károly Schranz, Gabor Ormai, and András Fejér. It first received international attention in 1977, winning first place 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 top honors at the Budapest International String Quartet Competition in 1978 and the Bratislava Competition in 1981. Violinist Edward Dusinberre joined the quartet in 1993 and violist Roger Tapping in 1995. Violist Geraldine Walther succeeded Tapping in 2005. In 2001, the quartet was awarded the Order of Merit of the Knight's Cross of the Republic of Hungary.

**Edward Dusinberre** (first violin) was born in 1968 in Leamington Spa, England, and has enjoyed playing the violin from a young age. His early experiences as concertmaster of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain encouraged him to choose music as a profession. He studied with Ukrainian violinist Felix Andrievsky at the Royal College of Music in London and at The Juilliard School with Dorothy DeLay and Piotr Milewski. In 1990, he won the British Violin Recital Prize and gave his debut recital in London at the Purcell Room, South Bank Centre. Upon completion of his studies at Juilliard, Dusinberre auditioned for the Takács Quartet, which he joined in 1993. Future projects include a recording of Beethoven's violin sonatas no. 9 and 10 with David Korevaar and recitals in England with Charles Owen, including the world premiere of a recently discovered violin sonata by Dusinberre's grandfather, John R. Stainer. Dusinberre enjoys writing about music. In connection with the quartet's forthcoming Beethoven cycles in London and Madrid, he has written articles for the *Strad* magazine and *Guardian* newspaper. He lives in Boulder, Colorado, with his wife Beth, an archeologist who teaches at the University of Colorado, and their son Sam. He enjoys hiking and going to the theatre.

**Károly Schranz** (second violin) was born in 1952 in Budapest, Hungary. His first musical experiences were listening in restaurants to Gypsy bands, which he has

always admired for their virtuosity and musicianship. Schranz began playing the violin at the age of 4 under the very strict supervision of his mother, who often resorted to unconventional methods of teaching and encouraging practice. "To improve my bowing technique, she devised a method of attaching a string to my arm and pulling in the desired direction. When this approach failed, she spanked me with a wooden spoon, which resulted in my hatred toward practicing." At 14, he entered the Béla Bartók Secondary Music School, where he met his future wife, also a violin student at the school. In 1980, he received his music diploma from the Franz Liszt Academy of Music, where he studied with Mihály Szücs, András Mihály, and György Kurtág.

**Geraldine Walther** (viola) was principal violist of the San Francisco Symphony for twenty-nine years, having previously served as assistant principal of the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony, and the Miami Philharmonic. A native of Florida, she first picked up the viola in a public school music program in Tampa. She went on to study at the Manhattan School of Music with Lillian Fuchs and at the Curtis Institute with Michael Tree of the Guarneri Quartet. In 1979, she won first prize at the William Primrose International Competition. Among the many works Walther performed as soloist with the San Francisco Symphony are Mozart's *Sinfonia concertante*; Telemann's Concerto in G Major; Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*; Hindemith's

*Trauermusik*, *Der Schwanendreher*, and *Kammermusiken* Nos. 5 and 6; Tippett's Triple Concerto; Martinu's Rhapsody-Concerto; and the viola concertos of Walton, Piston, Henze, Musgrave, Bartók, Schnittke, and Penderecki. She performed the United States premieres of several important works with the orchestra. In May 2002, she was soloist in William Schuman's Concerto on Old English Rounds and the Britten Double Concerto for violin and viola. In 1995, she was selected by Sir Georg Solti as a member of his Musicians of the World, an orchestra composed of leading musicians from around the globe, for concerts in Geneva to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. She has also served as principal violist with the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego and has performed as soloist with other Bay Area orchestras. She has participated in leading chamber music festivals, including Marlboro, Santa Fe, Tanglewood, Bridgehampton, Cape Cod, and Amelia Island; the Telluride, Seattle, and Green music festivals; and Music@Menlo. She has collaborated with such artists as Isaac Stern, Pinchas Zukerman, and Jaime Laredo, and has appeared as a guest artist with some of the world's most renowned string quartets, including the Tokyo, Vermeer, Guarneri, Lindsay, Cypress, and St. Lawrence quartets. She joined the Takács Quartet as a regular member in 2005. In addition to her recordings for Hyperion with the quartet, Walther's recordings include Hindemith's *Trauermusik* and *Der Schwanendre-*

*her* with the San Francisco Symphony (both on London/Decca), Paul Chihara's *Golden Slumbers* with the San Francisco Chamber Singers (Albany), and Lou Harrison's *Threnody* (New Albion). As a member of the Volkert-Walther String Trio, she recorded *Delectable Pieces*. She has two grown daughters and lives in Longmont, Colorado, with her husband Tom.

**András Fejér** (cello) was born in 1955 into a musical family. His father was a cellist and conductor, and his mother was a pianist. He began playing the cello at the age of 7 because, as legend has it, his father was unwilling to listen to a violin-upstart practicing. Beginning when he was young, his parents held string quartet weekends, which were the most memorable of occasions if not for the music, then for the glorious desserts his mother used to prepare for the sessions. After attending a music high school, Fejér was admitted to the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in 1975, where he was a pupil of Ede Banda, András Mihály, Ferenc Rados, and György Kurtág. That same year he founded the Takács Quartet with three fellow classmates. Although the quartet has been his sole professional focus since then, he occasionally performs as a soloist. Fejér is married to a literature teacher. The couple have three children and live in the Rocky Mountains, where they enjoy year-round sunshine in beautiful Boulder, Colorado. When he is not on tour, he enjoys reading, photography, tennis, and hiking.