

65th Concert Series 2018-2019



FRIENDS *of* MUSIC

is pleased to present

Takács String Quartet

Edward Dusinberre, violin

Harumi Rhodes, violin

Geraldine Walther, viola

András Fejér, cello

Saturday, October 20, 2018

Sleepy Hollow High School, Sleepy Hollow, New York



FRIENDS *of* MUSIC

President:

Betsy Shaw Weiner, Croton

Vice President:

Howard Cohen, Cortlandt Manor

Secretary:

Susan Harris, Ossining

Treasurer:

Marc Auslander, Millwood

Board Associates:

Keith Austin, Briarcliff Manor

George Drapeau, Armonk

Nyla Isele, Croton

Board of Directors:

William Altman, Croton

Klaus Brunnemann, Briarcliff Manor

Adam Glenn, Sleepy Hollow

David Kraft, Briarcliff Manor

Tom Post, Mt. Kisco

Rosella Ranno, Briarcliff Manor

Thomas Bastone, White Plains

Who We Are

Friends of Music Concerts, Inc. is an award-winning, non-profit, volunteer organization now celebrating its 65th season of showcasing, right here in Westchester, artists chosen from among the finest in today's diverse world of chamber music. Additionally, our Partners in Education program in the public schools and free student admission to our concerts give young people enhanced exposure to and appreciation of classical music.

In order to help sustain what one of our artists called this “legendary series,” we would welcome people who can join the volunteers listed above, either as Board members or equally valued off-Board committee members. Specifics we are looking for include, but are not limited to, people with networking, editorial, business development, and/or fund-raising skills. Call us at 914-861-5080 or contact us on our website (see below); we can explore the range together.

Acknowledgments

Our concerts are made possible, in part, by an ArtsWestchester Program Support grant made with funds received from Westchester County Government. Additional support is received from many friends of Friends of Music who include subscribers and other ticket holders listed in this program.* **(This year a generous donor has offered to match new and increased contributions up to \$5,000.)** If you can help us in this way, please send your contributions to Friends of Music Concerts, Inc., P.O. Box 675, Millwood, NY 10546.

Program

String Quartet in D minor, Op. 76, No. 2 (“The Fifths”) Franz Joseph Haydn
Allegro
Andante o più tosto allegretto (1712-1809)
Menuetto: Allegro ma non troppo
Finale: Vivace assai

Quartet No. 4 in D Major, Op. 83 Dmitri Shostakovich
Allegretto (1906-1975)
Andantino
Allegretto
Finale: Allegretto

Intermission

Quartet in F minor, Op. 80 Felix Mendelssohn
Allegro vivace assaie (1809-1847)
Allegro assai
Adagio
Finale: Allegro molto

The Takacs String Quartet appears by arrangement with Seldy Cramer Artists, 601 Van Ness Avenue, #15, San Francisco, CA 94102, and records for Hyperion and Decca/London Records. The Takacs Quartet is Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Colorado in Boulder and are Associate Artists at Wigmore Hall, London. www.takacsquartet.com.

Next concert

Saturday, November 3, 2018, 8:00 pm at Sleepy Hollow High School, Sleepy Hollow, New York

Nathan Lee, piano

Program: Robert Schumann: Abegg Variations, Op. 1; Beethoven: Sonata No. 21, Op. 52 “Waldstein”; Ravel: Selections from Miroirs; Scarlatti: Three Sonatas; Chopin: Ballade No. 3 in A-flat Major, Op. 47; Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2.

Program notes

String Quartet Op. 76 in D minor, No. 2 (“The Fifths”)

Franz Joseph Haydn

In 1795 Joseph Haydn had completed his second visit to London. At age sixty-three, he already had attained unusual longevity for his time. England had showered wealth and honors on him; following his last concert, he lingered there for two months before going home to Vienna to live out his remaining years.

No one at the time could have predicted how different the work of Haydn’s last years would be from what had preceded them. He had written more than a hundred symphonies, but after the dozen masterpieces that he had composed expressly for London audiences, he never wrote another. Yet with the knowledge of Handel’s oratorios that he had acquired in London, he now modernized and revitalized that form in his own *The Creation* and *The Seasons*. He also composed six masses and some other sacred music for the princely Esterházy family for whom he had served as staff conductor and composer for thirty previous years.

His remaining instrumental works were confined almost solely to some string quartets, music that sums up a lifetime of supreme invention. In 1797 he wrote the six quartets we know as Opus 76; in 1799, the two of Opus 77. In doing them he wrote with the kind of controlled freedom that comes only with great maturity; their rich instrumental texture is very modern for its time.

Count Joseph Erdödy, Chamberlain and Privy State Counselor to the Emperor, commissioned the six Opus 76 quartets; of course, Haydn dedicated them to him. The Erdödys were an important family, noble and musical, related by marriage to the Esterházy family. Count Ladislaus Erdödy is listed among the subscribers to Mozart’s 1783 concerts in Vienna, and Beethoven dedicated his two Trios, Op. 70 (1808) and two Cello Sonatas, Op. 102 (1815), to his pupil, the Countess Maria, wife of Count Peter Erdödy.

The D minor Quartet, Op.76, the second of the set, takes its nickname (the Fifths) from the opening motif of the *Allegro* first movement, whose first and second pairs of notes are spaced five steps apart. Haydn uses this simple interval rather than a full-length melody as the movement’s principal theme. He then allows his imagination to roam, fully exploiting his contrapuntal skill and the virtuosity of the string players for whom he was writing. Next comes a three-part slow-ish movement, *Andante più tosto allegretto*, whose third part is a brilliant variation on the first.

The next movement, *Minuetto: Allegro ma non troppo*, is a canon for two instrumental “voices” that has a contrasting central section formerly called “The Witches Dance.” The quartet ends with a *Finale: Vivace assai* in the Gypsy style that Viennese composers often used so brilliantly in music written for their Hungarian benefactors. During its course, Haydn reintroduces the motif in fifths with which the quartet began.

Quartet No. 4 in D Major, Op. 83

Dmitri Shostakovich

The Communist Committee of the Soviet Union directly attacked Shostakovich and his music in 1948. He was stripped of his teaching position at the Conservatory, and his music was banned from both study and performance. He had begun his **String Quartet No. 4**, composed between April and December 1949, shortly after his return from New York, where he had experienced humiliation by being identified by Stalin as a member of the Soviet delegation to the Peace Congress. The Soviet secretary in charge of ideological matters, Andrei Zhdanov, issued a decree accusing Shostakovich, Prokofiev, and Khachaturian, among others, of “formalist and decadent” tendencies, “unhealthy individualism,” and “pessimism.” Shostakovich was forced to confess publicly and admit his contrition.

He then appeared to conform completely by releasing populist music and writing for the state-run film industry. He composed the populist oratorio *The Song of the Forests* and other works, but kept working on **Quartet No. 4**. Some commentators suggest that the first movement of the quartet, with its initial folk-like theme, is reminiscent of Sibelius or Nielsen, seeming both Scandinavian and bucolic. It is unquestionably a very lyrical piece that contrasts strongly with the very dramatic quartet that had preceded it. It was not premiered until 1955, two years after Stalin’s death; it now is one of the most frequently performed Shostakovich quartets in Russia.

The opening movement, *Allegretto*, in a kind of rondo form, mixes the pastoral with a unique sound that resembles that made by folk instruments of the Far East. Yet this music is characteristic of Shostakovich; the use he makes of the modal inflections takes the work quickly to a frenetic pitch of intensity. The first violin announces the theme, while the second provides a calm counterpoint. These are played over a sustained pedal note on viola and cello that lasts for more than sixty measures. The theme then expands in a glorious, warm *espressivo*.

The second movement, *Andantino*, is a lyrical romance that again creates a folk-like atmosphere. Throughout this movement Shostakovich gives voice to ardent lyricism; the elegiac theme most prominent in the first violin initially is accompanied only by the second violin in a kind of trio until the cello enters. After the melodious development section, the instruments reprise the first theme, but now muted, continuing through a long coda that not only introduces new aspects of the theme but also reintroduces material from the first movement.

Instead of a scherzo in the third movement, *Allegretto*, Shostakovich offers a delicate Haydn-esque Classical movement in a minor tonality, related only subtly to the earlier movements. It includes both humor and sarcasm, using a rondo form and some ostinato patterns that link it to the final movement. The viola takes the spotlight at the end in order to introduce the finale.

The unique *Finale: Allegretto*, the most extended movement, again includes the kind of quasi-eastern or perhaps Caucasian folk music sound that some commentators also have call Hebraic because of the use of an augmented interval associated with that genre. These folk elements bring this original, fascinatingly subtle work to its quiet conclusion.

Quartet in F minor, Op. 80

Felix Mendelssohn

Felix Mendelssohn was an extraordinary child prodigy, a composer who had his first public performance at the age of nine. His wealthy banker father spared nothing to help bring his son to artistic maturity. The musicales held on alternate Sundays in the Mendelssohns' great house were a must for any musician visiting or living in Berlin, and almost every time something the young composer had written was performed.

Although Mendelssohn wrote a great deal of music in his childhood (thirteen symphonies and several concertos, for example), he never released them for publication; instead, he developed and polished his skill in his privileged home workshop. Then, at age sixteen he wrote his nearly perfect **String Octet in E-flat Major** and, at seventeen, the **Midsummer Night's Dream Overture**.

In contrast, the **Quartet in F minor**, a mature work, was his last major composition, written in his final year of life and not published until three years after he died. Most commentators feel that its inspiration was the death of his beloved sister Fanny, seeing it as an impassioned lament of anguish. He wrote it in Switzerland, to which he had repaired in an attempt to recover from overwork. His long-time friend, Joseph Benedict reflected: "It would be difficult to cite any piece of music that so completely impresses the listener with a sensation of gloomy foreboding, of anguish of mind, and of the most poetic melancholy, as does this masterly and eloquent composition." Joseph Stevenson wrote: "There are few works in music that seem so firmly linked to its composer's death," adding "It is not out of bounds to say that he died of grief for his sister, and his quartet expresses that grief and pessimism so strongly that, for once, Mendelssohn reveals more of himself than even Schumann would have."

The first movement, *Allegro vivace assai*, contains a feeling of anxiety and unease from the beginning. The themes wrangle with despair. An initial denial of grief is evident as is a feeling of suffering. Passages of great dramatic intensity and turbulence alternate with music of calm and grace, detailing the poignancy of the composer's mental anguish.

The tense second movement, *Allegro assai*, is characterized by the emotional cantabile of the first violin floating over the churning of the other instruments. There is no lightness here, but rather an impassioned outburst of driving rhythms with syncopations and jarring accents as well as an harmonic instability indicative of Mendelssohn's emotional turmoil. Its texture, especially of the trio section, is dark, lean, and desolate. The poignant third movement, *Adagio*, is deeply felt, bringing with it a calm sense of grief, coupled with tender, perhaps even nostalgic remembrance of good times. The beginning of the *Finale: Allegro molto* is syncopated; it then grows into a great state of agitation, with all four instruments seeming to attempt to break the bonds that hold them. The quartet ends with continued assertiveness and drama, perhaps symbolic of a feeling of rage and anger, while despair again speaks forth from the coda.

--notes provided by Susan Halpern

About the Artists

Formed in 1975 at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest, the **Takács Quartet** first received international attention in 1977, winning First Prize and the Critics' Prize at the International String Quartet Competition in Evian, France. Now, many awards and honors later and based in Boulder at the University of Colorado, the Quartet is in its forty-fourth season, during which it will perform eighty concerts around the world. They will continue their four annual concerts as Associate Artists at London's Wigmore Hall in addition to performing in Berlin, Cologne, Baden-Baden, and Bilbao, and at the Bath Mozartfest. The Quartet also will perform extensively in the United States. In addition to this appearance with Friends of Music Concerts, their schedule includes two concerts at Lincoln Center and at the University of Chicago, Princeton, and Berkeley. A tour with Garrick Ohlsson will culminate in a recording for Hyperion of the Elgar and Amy Beach piano quintets. The latest Takács cd, to be released next spring, features Dohnanyi's two piano quintets and his second string quartet, with pianist Marc-André Hamelin.

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

Aspects of the Quartet's interests and history are explored in violinist 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 string quartets.



Grantor - \$2500 and over

Arts Westchester

Dr. Susan R. Harris and
Thomas Molnar**Benefactor - \$1000 to \$2499**

Marc and Rochelle Auslander

Alice and Stanley Goldstein

Anita and David Kraft

Rosella and Kurt Ranno

Betsy Shaw Weiner

Patron - \$500 to \$999

Joan and Keith Austin

Miriam and Howard Budin

Deborah Donaldson and
John Wehr

Nicholas and Shelley Robinson

Ruth and David Schwab

Stephen Ucko

Donald Zagoria

Sponsor - \$250 to \$499

Helene and Martin Celnick

Howard Cohen

David and Cynthia Hodes

Nyla and Gerhard Isele

Jean Rivlin

Donor - \$100 to \$249

William Altman

Bernie and Lois Bacharach

William Bronner and Nancy
Bloomgarden

Stephen and Susan Butterfass

Robert and Mona Buzak

Gloria and Wally Cooper

Peter and Gillian Corfield

Peter and Phyllis Davies

Andrea Erstling and Philippe
Charles

Andrew and Dominique Fitch

Jennifer Gardy

Barbara Gochman

Philip and Ellen Heidelberger

Barry Johnson and Niamh
Fitzgerald

Jacob and Irene Judd

Jon and Erica Kolbrener

Carolyn and Lawrence Kunin

Valerie Lyle

Margaret and Donald Mahaney

James G. McMurtry III, MD

Mirla and George Morrison

Sandra A. Forster and Norman
Nadel

Peter Oden

Peggy and Tom Post

Roland Reisley and Barbara
Coats

Joelyn Rohman

Robert Schloss and Emily Sack

Brigitte Sims

Fern and Jeff Stearney

Steven and Rita Waldbaum

Rita Wexler

Sandra Zinman

Contributor - Under \$100Anna Anagnostakis in memory
of Maggie O'Sullivan

Barbara and Hal Baron

Rachel Bernstein and Alan
Milton

Dorothea Bone

Marcia Botti

Elizabeth and Ronald Bronk

Haya and Zvi Caspi

Anne Chehebar

Karen Chow

Joan Conklin

Arthur and Donna Cooper

Nancy Deland

Ted and Blanche Dolmatch

Fred B. Draper and Annabel
Schneider

Paula and Larry Edlavitch

Rita and John Fisher

Melvin Fitting and Roma
Simon-FittingBruce Fleischer and Judy
Freedman

Muriel Fox

William Fried

Anne Golden and Robert
Kruger

Louise Goldenberg

Mildred Gonzalez

Julia Grosberg and Elliot
Fischer

Sonya and Ernest Hammer

Dr. W. Jean Horkans

Helene Isaac

Sally Kellock

Ronnie Kent

Rosemary King

Doris Kinney

Sylvain Kleinhaus

Burton and Joyce Koyner

Sue Kurtzberg

Elizabeth M. Laite

Shirley Leitner

Judith Levine

Daniel and Marissa Licht

Mrs. Susan Lichten

Dr. Morton Linder

Margery Loewenwarter

Helen Lowenstein

David Lubell and Jody Israel

Alice Marcus

Miriam Margoshes

Lisa Olsson and Robert Plotkin

Edna Ortof, PhD

Estelle and Gerald Palevsky

Stephanie and Richard Paley

Mrs. Liliame M. Potier

George J. Rehl

Susan Rose

Joan and Richard Rose

Ann and Ben Rubenstein

Gail Ryan

Mrs. Lee Sack

Ellen Sarna

Esther Schwartz

Laura S. Seitz

John and Monica Shanahan

Gail Sider

Robert and Ruth Singleton

Suzanne K. Smith

Martin Smolin

Rhoda Stephens

Beverly and Oliver Swift

Ellen Theg

Dr. Henry and Karen Thomas

Lynne K. Verna and Michael
Stemerman

Hong Zhao

