

Sunday, December 3, 2006, 3pm
Hertz Hall

Takács Quartet

Edward Dusinger, *violin*
Károly Schranz, *violin*
Geraldine Walther, *viola*
András Fejér, *cello*

PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) String Quartet in A major, Op. 18, No. 5

Allegro
Menuetto
Andante cantabile
Allegro

Beethoven String Quartet in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4

Allegro ma non tanto
Scherzo: Andante scherzoso quasi Allegretto
Menuetto: Allegretto
Allegro

INTERMISSION

Beethoven String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132

Assai sostenuto—Allegro
Allegro ma non tanto
Molto adagio—Andante
Alla Marcia, assai vivace—Più allegro
(recitative)—Allegro appassionato

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Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

String Quartet in A major, Op. 18, No. 5

Composed in 1799.

Premiered in 1800 in Vienna.

“He was short, about 5 feet, 4 inches, thickset and broad, with a massive head, a wildly luxuriant crop of hair, protruding teeth, a small rounded nose, and a habit of spitting whenever the notion took him. He was clumsy, and anything he touched was liable to be upset or broken. Badly coordinated, he could never learn to dance, and more often than not managed to cut himself while shaving. He was sullen and suspicious, touchy as a misanthropic cobra, believed that everybody was out to cheat him, had none of the social graces, was forgetful, and was prone to insensate rages.” Thus, the late *New York Times* critic Harold Schonberg, in his book about *The Lives of the Great Composers*, described Ludwig van Beethoven, the burly peasant with the unquenchable fire of genius who descended, aged 22, upon Vienna in 1792. Beethoven had been charged by his benefactor in his hometown of Bonn, Count Ferdinand von Waldstein, to go to the Austrian capital and “receive the spirit of Mozart from the hands of Haydn.” He did study for a short time with Haydn, then universally regarded as the greatest living composer, but young Ludwig proved to be a recalcitrant student, and the sessions soon ended, though the two maintained a respectful, if cool, relationship until Haydn’s death in 1809.

In a world still largely accustomed to the reserved, genteel musical style of pre-Revolutionary classicism, Beethoven burst upon the scene like a fiery meteor. The Viennese aristocracy took this young lion to its bosom. Beethoven expected as much. Unlike his predecessors, he would not assume the servant’s position traditionally accorded to a musician, refusing, for example, not only to eat in the kitchen, but becoming outspokenly hostile if he was not seated next to the master of the house at table. The more enlightened nobility,

to its credit, recognized the genius of this gruff Rhinelander, and encouraged his work. Shortly after his arrival, for example, Prince Lichnowsky provided Beethoven with living quarters, treating him more like a son than a guest. Lichnowsky even instructed the servants to answer the musician’s call before his own, should both ring at the same time. In large part, such gestures provided for Beethoven’s support during his early Viennese years. For most of the first decade after he arrived, Beethoven made some effort to follow the prevailing fashion in the sophisticated city, but, though he outfitted himself with good boots, a proper coat and the necessary accouterments, and enjoyed the society of Vienna’s best houses, there never ceased to roil within him the untamed energy of creativity. It was inevitably only a matter of time before the fancy clothes were discarded, as a bear would shred a flimsy paper bag.

The year of the completion of the six Op. 18 Quartets—1800—was an important time in Beethoven’s development. He had achieved a success good enough to write to his old friend Franz Wegeler in Bonn, “My compositions bring me in a good deal, and may I say that I am offered more commissions than it is possible for me to carry out. Moreover, for every composition I can count on six or seven publishers and even more, if I want them. People no longer come to an arrangement with me. I state my price, and they pay.” At the time of this gratifying recognition of his talents, however, the first signs of his fateful deafness appeared, and he began the titanic struggle that became one of the gravitational poles of his life. Within two years, driven from the social contact on which he had flourished by the fear of discovery of his malady, he penned the Heiligenstadt Testament, his *cri de cœur* against this wicked trick of the gods. These first Quartets stand on the brink of this great crisis in Beethoven’s life.

The string quartet, perfected by Haydn, was the favorite form of musical entertainment in the salons of Vienna at the turn of the 19th century. As early as 1795, Count Anton Georg Apponyi had suggested to Beethoven that he

Program Notes

undertake some works in the form, but the proposal did not bear fruit until three years later, when the Op. 18 set was begun. In 1798 Beethoven was closely associated with the noted composer and theorist Emanuel Alois Förster, perhaps as a student. (Beethoven later referred to him as his “old master.”) Förster was one of the era’s foremost composers of string quartets, and his influence may have inspired Beethoven to undertake his first works in the genre. Beethoven, at that time of his life still determined to impress the aristocracy, probably wished to have his name attached to the most elegant musical form of the day. At any rate, the Quartets were begun in mid-1798 (though some sketches apparently date back to the early 1790s), mostly composed the following year, and completed in 1800. They were first played by the ensemble of Ignaz Schuppanzigh either (reports differ) in the home of Förster or in the Viennese palace of Prince Karl Lobkowitz, to whom they were dedicated upon their publication in 1801. Lobkowitz was so pleased with the Quartets that he pledged Beethoven an annual stipend of 600 gulden. With their respectful renewal of the Classical style and technique of Haydn, the Quartets enjoyed a good (though, as was always the case with Beethoven’s works when they were new, not unanimous) success, and were frequently heard during the composer’s lifetime. Looking back on Op. 18 in 1811, a critic for the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* wrote, “In them the loveliest melodies appeal to the feelings, and the unity, the supreme simplicity, the particular and firmly sustained character in each individual piece making up those Quartets raise them to the level of masterworks, and join Beethoven’s name with the revered names of Haydn and Mozart.”

Beethoven modeled his Quartet in A major, Op. 18, No. 5 on Mozart’s Quartet in the same key (K. 464) from the set of six such works he dedicated to Joseph Haydn. Many years later Carl Czerny recalled, “Beethoven once saw at my house the score of the six ‘Haydn’ quartets by Mozart. He opened the fifth in A and said, ‘That’s what I call a work! In it Mozart was

telling the world: Look what I could do if the time were right!’” Beethoven immediately copied out the last two movements for his own study. It is significant that he looked to this particular composition, the most harmonically advanced of the “Haydn Quartets,” just at the turn of the 19th century, when he was seeking to move beyond the boundaries of 18th-century Classicism into a grander and more dramatic mode of expression. It was a time of experimentation and even stylistic uncertainty for him which, through the experience gained in such works as this A major Quartet, culminated in that magnificent gateway to Romantic music: the “Eroica” Symphony of 1804.

The opening movement of the Quartet is a polite sonata-allegro in 6/8 meter. The main theme is a scalar configuration that seems to encounter a certain difficulty in sustaining its forward motion; it is succeeded by a rather tortuous unison motive used as the transition. The complementary theme is a sprightly snippet quietly given in close dialogue between the second violin and the viola. The ensuing development is short and somewhat diffuse, and leads to a full and exact repeat (with the proper key modifications) of the exposition material. As in Mozart’s K. 464 Quartet, the Menuetto occupies the second place in this work. In his fine study of Beethoven’s quartets, Joseph Kerman wrote, “This Menuetto is a pensive essay in classic grace, with a sophistication of its own, and most astonishing of all, with a delicacy that matches Mozart without at all following him in spirit.” Next comes a set of five variations with an extensive coda built on a tightly symmetrical theme. There is no minor mode section and the elaborations are largely figural in nature, but in the fourth variation Beethoven explores some surprising tonal areas in an attempt to bring added emotional depth to the movement. The finale achieves a dancing effortlessness that again recalls its Mozartian model. Indeed, the chorale-like second theme of its sonata form is a barely disguised borrowing from the development section in the last movement of Mozart’s Quartet. Kerman called the A major

Beethoven's "most imponderable and unruffled quartet"—delicately within the constraints of the Classical formal and expressive tradition, yet apparently uncomfortable at being there. This fascinating if not entirely typical piece represents an important step in the most crucial period of Beethoven's stylistic metamorphosis.

String Quartet in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4

Composed in 1800.

Premiered in 1800 in Vienna.

The Quartet No. 4, the only number of Op. 18 in a minor key, was apparently the last of the set to be composed; the manuscript was delivered to the Viennese firm of T. Mollo by the end of 1800 and published (along with the Quartets Nos. 5 and 6) the following October. The C minor Quartet is unusual in Beethoven's output in that no sketches for it have been discovered, a circumstance which led Joseph de Marliave to conjecture that it was written "at a single stroke, and at express speed." It seems more likely, however, that Beethoven may have borrowed ideas for the composition from some earlier works he carried with him to Vienna from Bonn, a theory advocated by his pioneering biographer Thayer. The C minor Quartet, which shares its impassioned key with the Fifth Symphony, the Third Piano Concerto, the "Pathétique" Sonata, the Coriolan Overture and some half-dozen of Beethoven's other chamber compositions, opens with a darkly colored theme that rises from the lowest note of the violin to high in the instrument's range. Some stabbing chords begin the transition to the subsidiary subject, a sunshine melody derived from the leaping motive that closed the main theme. Both the main and second themes are treated in the development section. The recapitulation recalls the earlier thematic material to balance and round out the movement. Rather than following the highly charged opening Allegro with a conventional slow movement, Beethoven provided a witty essay titled Scherzo, which is realized as a miniature sonata form. The movement begins

with a jolly fugato, and the texture remains largely contrapuntal thereafter. ("The occasional displays of counterpoint in Beethoven's early works are more than merely competent," wrote the esteemed English musicologist Sir Donald Tovey. "They are, unquestionably, brilliant.") The somber Menuetto that follows is balanced by a delicate central trio of almost Schubertian grace. The Quartet closes with a Haydnesque rondo based on a sparkling theme reminiscent of the exotic "Turkish" music that was popular in Vienna at the end of the 18th century. Ferdinand Ries, the composer's pupil, recounted an anecdote concerning the finale that provides insight into Beethoven's independent spirit and heady self-confidence: "During a walk I mentioned to Beethoven [that I had found] two pure [parallel] fifth progressions in his C minor Quartet.... Seeing that I was right, he said; 'And who has forbidden them?' I answered in amazement, 'But they are first principles.... Marpurg, Kirnberger, Fux, etc., all the theorists!'—'But I allow them thus!' was his answer."

String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132

Composed in 1825.

Premiered on September 9, 1825 in Vienna by the Schuppanzigh Quartet.

"I sit pondering and pondering. I have long known what I want to do, but I can't get it down on paper. I feel I am on the threshold of great things." These words of Beethoven, written in 1822, were prophetic. At the time, he was still involved in the five years of Herculean labor that finally yielded up the *Missa Solemnis* in 1823, a task that demanded all of his concentration lest it be crowded from his thoughts by a head (and sketchbook) full of yet unconnected ideas for a new symphony, into which, he was convinced, he needed to somehow take the unprecedented step of integrating a chorus. The string quartet, a genre for which he had not written in a dozen years, was also on Beethoven's mind, as evidenced by a letter of June 5, 1822 to the Leipzig publisher Carl Friedrich Peters urging him to consider

Program Notes

issuing a new quartet that he would have ready “very soon.” Burdened by poor health, financial difficulties (Rossini was appalled at the squalor of Beethoven’s small, dank apartment when he visited him that year), the emotional drain of being guardian to a worthless nephew, and the obsession with finishing the *Missa* and the Ninth Symphony, it was, however, to be some time before he was able to return to quartet writing in earnest.

On November 9, 1822, Prince Nikolas Galitzin, a devotee of Beethoven’s music and an amateur cellist, wrote from St. Petersburg asking Beethoven for “one, two or three quartets, for which labor I will be glad to pay you whatever amount you think proper.” Beethoven was elated by the commission, and he immediately accepted it and set the fee of 50 ducats for each quartet, a high price, but one readily accepted by Galitzin. The music, however, took somewhat longer. The Ninth Symphony was completed in February 1823, but Beethoven, exhausted, was unable to begin Galitzin’s quartets until May. “I am really impatient to have a new quartet of yours,” badgered Galitzin. “Nevertheless, I beg you not to mind and to be guided in this only by your inspiration and the disposition of your mind.” The first of the quartets for Galitzin (E-flat major, Op. 127) was not completed until February 1825; the second (A minor, Op. 132) was finished five months later; and the third (B-flat major, Op. 130) was written between July and November, during one of the few periods of relatively good health that Beethoven enjoyed in his last decade. (Beethoven completed the Op. 131 and Op. 135 Quartets the following year to round out this stupendous ultimate series of his compositions.) Galitzin received his three new scores in fine copies by the middle of 1826, and promised payment “in a day or two.” The Prince, for all his good intentions and evident sympathy for Beethoven’s creative process, however, found himself, as he put it, “awkwardly placed” at the time, and the bill remained unpaid. (During the preceding year, one of Galitzin’s children died, his wife fell gravely ill, and his indirect involvement in a revolutionary movement brought him to

the edge of bankruptcy.) Beethoven sued for his money without success, and the account was not finally settled until 1852 (!) between Galitzin’s son and Beethoven’s heirs.

The A minor Quartet (Op. 132) was the product of the difficult first months of 1825. Beethoven had begun sketching the piece by the end of the previous year, but before he could progress very far with it, he was stricken with a serious intestinal inflammation, a frequent bane of his later years. “I am not feeling well,” he complained to Dr. Anton Braunhofer on April 18th. “I hope that you will not refuse to come to my help, for I am in great pain.” Braunhofer was alarmed by the composer’s condition, and gave him strict advice: “No wine; no coffee; no spices of any kind.... I’ll wager that if you take a drink of spirits, you’ll be lying weak and exhausted on your back in a few hours.” The physician also recommended recuperation in the country to allow for the plentiful imbibing of “fresh air” and “natural milk.” Beethoven had recovered sufficiently by May 7 to repair to the distant Viennese suburb of Baden, and remained there—with occasional visits to the city—until mid-October. It was at Baden that the A minor Quartet was largely written. Beethoven’s illness and recovery touch directly on the music of the Quartet, which takes as its centerpiece a magnificent Adagio titled “A Sacred Song of Thanks from One Made Well, to the Divine; in the Lydian Mode.” Though not specifically programmatic, the Quartet, whose overall structure follows the minor-to-major, dark-to-light progression familiar from the Fifth and Ninth Symphonies, evidences what Joseph de Marliave, in his study of the quartets, called “the habitual state of mind of the composer: the fight against destiny, the triumph of joy over pain.” The composer’s recent biographer Maynard Solomon observed that “music here appears to become an implicit agency of healing, a talisman against death.”

The premiere of the A minor Quartet was given by the ensemble of violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh, a champion of Beethoven’s works in earlier years and the first musician in

Austria to undertake public quartet concerts. Schuppanzigh had been in Russia for some time and only returned to Vienna at the end of April 1823, when he resumed his series of concerts, which once again became major events in the city's musical life. Schuppanzigh gave the first performance of the Op. 132 Quartet on September 9, 1825 at the Hotel Der Wilden Mann in Vienna to an audience of about fourteen persons. Beethoven had enticed the publisher Maurice Schlesinger to come from Paris to hear the new work, and he was so impressed with the piece that he agreed immediately to issue the score. Schuppanzigh's quartet played the work again privately two days later, and gave its public premiere in Vienna on November 6. The reaction to all of these performances was uniformly laudatory.

Basil Lam summarized the structural logic of the A minor Quartet in the following manner: "No other composition in all Beethoven's works shows the unintegrated contrasts of this Quartet. Once he had become possessed by the unique vision of the *Heiliger Dankgesang* [Holy Song of Thanks], no solution of the formal problem was available other than to surround it with sound images united only by their total diversity." The Adagio, then, is not only the central element in the five-movement structure of the Quartet, but is also its expressive heart. The movement's form alternates varied versions of a hymnal theme of otherworldly stillness based on the ancient church modes with a more rhythmically dynamic strain marked "feeling new strength," a technique also used in the Fifth and Ninth Symphonies. The *Heiliger Dankgesang* is one of the most stunningly rapturous creations in 19th-century music.

To support a slow movement of such magnitude requires surrounding music of considerable breadth and emotional weight, and Beethoven chose to precede it with a large sonata form and a fully developed scherzo and trio. The opening movement, craggy and sometimes even belligerently willful in its progress, is based on several terse ideas presented in the exposition: a slow-moving motive in melodic half-steps; a

melancholy violin line with dotted rhythms; a playful little imitative episode that serves as the formal second theme; and a more lyrical strain presented by the violins above a galloping triplet accompaniment. There is a brief development section, mostly based on the half-step motive and the melancholy melody, before the apparent recapitulation of the themes begins. Though the themes are presented in proper order and balance, they are not adjusted as to key, and another full recapitulation, suitably transposed, is required before the movement can end. The long scherzo, in A major, developed almost entirely from the violin motive heard in the fifth measure, is paired with a central trio whose flowing themes are often rhythmically displaced.

Beethoven followed the transcendent *Heiliger Dankgesang* with one of his most glaring formal incongruities—a little march of four-square structure whose emotional blandness provides an almost shocking descent from the exalted realms of the Adagio. This movement lasts only a short time, however, and it is linked to the finale by an instrumental recitative, as Beethoven had done in the Ninth Symphony. The last movement, in fact, is based on a theme that he had originally intended for that Symphony, but which here becomes the subject for a vast sonata-rondo that gains the hard-won, victorious luminosity of A major in its closing pages.

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About the Artists



Recognized as one of the world's premiere string quartets, the **Takács Quartet** plays with a virtuosic technique, intense immediacy and consistently burnished tone. The ensemble explores its repertoire with intellectual curiosity and passion, creating performances that are probing, revealing and constantly engaging. The Takács Quartet is based in Boulder, Colorado, where it has been in residence at the University of Colorado since 1983.

Now entering its 31st season, the Takács Quartet has performed repertoire ranging from Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert to Bartók, Britten, Dutilleux, Janáček and Sheng in virtually every music capital in North America, Europe, Australasia and Japan, as well as at prestigious festivals, including Aspen, Berlin, Cheltenham, City of London, Mostly Mozart, Ravinia, Salzburg, Schleswig Holstein and Tanglewood. The ensemble is also known for its award-winning recordings on the Decca label, including, most recently, its recording of the complete Beethoven quartet cycle, which has been awarded a Grammy Award, two Gramophone Awards, the BBC Music Magazine

Disc of the Year Award (late quartets), the Classical Brits Award for Ensemble Album of the Year (late quartets) and three Japan Record Academy Chamber Music Awards.

The Takács Quartet's 2006–2007 highlights include a return to Asia with concerts in Nagoya, Tokyo, Osaka and Seoul; a continuation of the complete Beethoven Cycle at UC Berkeley and in Napa, California; concerts with pianist Stephen Hough in London, Valencia, Bilbao and Bristol; three concerts in London's Queen Elizabeth Hall; performances in New York, Beverly Hills, Denver, Albuquerque, Ann Arbor, Honolulu, Louisville, Princeton, Sarasota, Vancouver, Philadelphia, San Diego, Cincinnati, Washington, D.C., Tucson, Paris, Edinburgh, Utrecht and Darmstadt, among others; and two concerts each at the Aspen Festival and the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara.

Recent notable Takács Quartet appearances have included performances of the Beethoven cycle in New York, Cleveland, London, Los Angeles, Paris and Sydney; the Bartók cycle in Cleveland, London, Madrid, Seville, Valencia,

About the Artists

New York, Berkeley and Tokyo; the Brahms cycle in London; the Schubert cycle in London, Lisbon and cities in Italy, the Netherlands and Spain; concerts in Japan; the world premiere of Bright Sheng's Quartet No. 3; the world premiere of Su Lian Tan's *Life in Wayang*; a 14-city U.S. tour with the 39th Poet Laureate of the United States, Robert Pinsky; and a collaboration with the Hungarian folk ensemble Muzsikás in a series of joint concerts exploring the connections between traditional Hungarian folk melodies and the works of Bartók and Kodály.

In 2005, the Takács Quartet signed a contract with Hyperion Records, for which their first recording will be released in 2006. The Quartet has also made 16 recordings for the Decca label since 1988 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 Mr. Haefliger, which was nominated in 2000 for a Grammy Award; string quartets by Smetana and Borodin; Schubert's Quartet in G major and "Notturmo" Piano Trio with Mr. 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 György Pauk, viola.

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 has 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 Dusinberre joined the Quartet in 1993 and violist Roger Tapping in 1995. Of the original ensemble, violinist Károly Schranz and cellist András Fejér remain. Violist Geraldine Walther replaced Mr. Tapping in August 2005. In addition to its residency at the University of Colorado, the ensemble is also a Resident Quartet at the Aspen Music Festival and School, and, in 2005, its members were named Associate Artists of the South Bank Centre in London.

In 2001, the Takács Quartet was awarded the Order of Merit of the Knight's Cross of the Republic of Hungary.

Edward Dusinberre (*violin*) was born in 1968 in Leamington Spa, England, and has enjoyed playing and performing the violin from a very 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 the Ukrainian violinist Felix Andrievsky at the Royal College of Music in London, where he has won numerous prizes, including a prize for scales (which, unfortunately, no longer form a part of his performance repertoire). Upon graduation in 1990, Mr. Dusinberre was awarded the Tagore Medal for the most outstanding student in his year. During the same year, he won the British Violin Recital Prize and gave his debut recital in London at the Purcell Room, South Bank Centre.

After his graduation from the Royal College of Music, Mr. Dusinberre received scholarships from the Countess of Munster Trust, Martin Scholarship Fund and the Ian Fleming Fund to continue his studies at The Juilliard School with Dorothy Delay. While at Juilliard, he served as concertmaster of the Juilliard Orchestra and continued to perform recitals and concertos in

About the Artists

England. Upon completion of his studies at Juilliard, Mr. Dusinberre auditioned for the Takács Quartet, which he joined in 1993.

Mr. Dusinberre lives in Boulder, Colorado with his wife Beth, an archeologist who teaches at the University of Colorado, and their son Sam. He enjoys hiking in the mountains near Boulder and going to the theatre whenever time permits. He is also greatly interested in chess, although the need for obsessive attention to details tends to deter a very active involvement in the game.

Károly Schranz (*violin*) was born in 1952 in Budapest, Hungary. His first musical experiences were listening to the Gypsy bands in restaurants, which he has always admired for their virtuosity and musicianship. Mr. Schranz began playing the violin at the age of four 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 towards practicing.”) At the age of 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.

Between 1976 and 1980, Mr. Schranz was co-concertmaster of the Hungarian Opera Orchestra, where his wife was also a member. (“My wife sat at the stand behind me. Every time I turned to look at the ballerina’s legs, I felt a sharp knocking on my head—a subtle reminder that she was keeping an eye on me.”)

One of Mr. Schranz’ childhood passions was playing soccer. Perhaps it was no coincidence then, that he met András Fejér, Gábor Ormai and Gábor Takács-Nagy, with whom he formed the Takács Quartet in 1975, on a soccer field.

Since 1986, Mr. Schranz, his wife and three daughters have made their home in Boulder, Colorado, where they often go hiking. He also loves to play tennis as often as his very busy schedule permits. Mr. Schranz is the recipient of the 1983 Franz Liszt Prize.

Geraldine Walther (*viola*), the most recently appointed member of the Takács String Quartet (starting in the 2005–2006 season), has been Principal Violist of the San Francisco Symphony (SFS) since 1976, having previously served as assistant principal of the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Miami Philharmonic and the Baltimore Symphony. Among the many works Ms. Walther has 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 William Walton, Walter Piston, Thea Musgrave, Béla Bartók, Alfred Schnittke and Krzysztof Penderecki. She has given the U.S. premieres of several important works with the SFS, including Toru Takemitsu’s *A String Around Autumn*, Peter Lieberman’s Viola Concerto and George Benjamin’s *Viola*, together with SFS Associate Principal Violist Yun Jie Liu. In May 2002, she was soloist in William Schuman’s Concerto on *Old English Rounds*, the American premiere of Robin Holloway’s Viola Concerto, and Britten’s Double Concerto for violin and viola.

In 1995, Ms. Walther 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 50th 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. An avid chamber musician, Ms. Walther regularly participates in leading chamber music festivals, including Marlboro, Santa Fe, Tanglewood, Bridgehampton and,

About the Artists

most recently, the Telluride, Seattle and Ruby Mountain festivals, Music at Kohl Mansion, Green Music Festival in Sonoma, and the inaugural season of Music@Menlo two summers ago. 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 Vermeer, Guarneri, Lindsay, Cypress and St. Lawrence quartets. In 2001, she joined the Tokyo Quartet on a tour of Spain and Italy.

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 seven, because as legend has it, his father was unwilling to listen to a violin-upstart practicing. Since an early age, his parents have held string quartet weekends, which, for the young cellist were the most memorable of occasions, if not for the music, then for the glorious desserts his mother used to prepare for those sessions.

After attending a music high school, Mr. 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 String Quartet with three fellow classmates. Although the Quartet has been his sole professional focus since then, he does perform as a soloist occasionally as well.

Mr. Fejér is married to a literature teacher. They 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.