

Sunday, March 25, 2007, 3pm
Hertz Hall

Takács Quartet

Edward Dusinberre, *violin*

Károly Schranz, *violin*

Geraldine Walther, *viola*

András Fejér, *cello*

PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) String Quartet in F major, Op. 18, No. 1

Allegro con brio
Adagio affettuoso ed appassionato
Scherzo: Allegro molto
Allegro

Beethoven String Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 74,
“Harp”

Poco adagio — Allegro
Adagio ma non troppo
Presto — Più presto quasi prestissimo
Allegretto con variazioni

INTERMISSION

Beethoven String Quartet in C-sharp minor, Op. 131

Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo
Allegro molto vivace
Allegro moderato
Andante ma non troppo e molto cantabile —
Più mosso — Andante moderato e
lusinghiero — Adagio — Allegretto —
Adagio, ma non troppo e semplice —
Allegretto

Presto
Adagio quasi un poco andante
Allegro

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"If Beethoven had never written a quartet, I would write quartets; as it is, I cannot."

—Luigi Cherubini

HOW DOES A COMPOSER enter a realm dominated by the likes of Haydn and Mozart? Very cautiously. Both Haydn and Mozart had published piano sonatas, but neither composer was esteemed for them. Their reputations had been built on operas, symphonies, piano concertos and string quartets. That Ludwig van Beethoven steered clear of these genres for his first dozen publications was certainly no accident. Beethoven set about making a name for himself as a composer in genres not typically associated with his illustrious predecessors (one of whom, Haydn, was his teacher).

Of Beethoven's first 17 publications, five were for piano solo and 10 were piano sonatas. Other important works in this group include piano trios, string trios and sonatas for violin and cello. Although the First and Second Piano Concertos, Beethoven's first forays into Mozart territory, were written and performed by 1795, the composer hesitated to preserve them in print, significantly revising both before publication in six years later. When Beethoven decided it was time to trod upon the sacred ground held by Haydn and Mozart, he did so with a vengeance, publishing his First Symphony, the First and Second Piano Concertos and his six String Quartets, Op. 18, all in 1801.

Publishing string quartets in sets of six was a practice maintained by Haydn and Mozart, and Beethoven surely conceived of the six Op. 18 quartets as a set. The keys of the six are F major, G major, D major, C minor, A major and B-flat major, and, according to Beethoven scholar Sieghard Brandenburg, the quartets were composed in the order 3, 1, 2, 5, 4, 6. Beethoven and Mollo probably placed the F-major quartet first in the set because it is the most adventurous of the six and was likely to please a public that appreciated novelty. The dedicatee of the opus is Prince Franz Lobkowitz. Next to Archduke Rudolph, Lobkowitz received the most notable dedications, including the Op. 18 Quartets, the Triple Concerto, Third Symphony, Fifth and

Sixth Symphonies (shared with Count Andreas Razumovsky), the Op. 74 Quartet and the song cycle, *An die ferne Geliebte*. The first three quartets of Op. 18 were published in June 1801 by Mollo in Vienna; the next three were published in October.

Information about early performances of the Op. 18 set is scarce, partly because at the time Beethoven had won more fame as a pianist than as a composer, and partly because his music activities confined themselves to the private houses of friends and the aristocracy. He had ample opportunity to hear readings of his new string quartets, and may have participated in such performances himself. In his early years, Beethoven played viola in quartet readings at the home of the composer, Emanuel Aloys Förster. He was also privy to the informal performances of Ignaz Schuppanzigh's (1776–1830) quartet in Prince Lichnowsky's residence. The quartet also met twice a week at composer Aloys Förster's home, and the first violinist, Schuppanzigh, gave the first performances of many of Beethoven's works. Schuppanzigh, the first important musician to achieve fame primarily as a quartet player, also led a quartet from 1808 to 1816 for Count Razumovsky, another of Beethoven's important patrons and the dedicatee of the three "Razumovsky" quartets, op. 59.

Despite the numerous available models by Haydn, Mozart and others, and despite the fact that the String Quartets, Op. 18, are clearly a product of their time, they could not have been written by any composer other than Beethoven. The six quartets of Op. 18 constitute Beethoven's most ambitious project of his early Vienna years.

String Quartet in F major, Op. 18, No. 1

In June 1799, Beethoven gave a manuscript copy of the String Quartet in F major, Op. 18, No. 1, to his friend Karl Amenda. Beethoven's remarks to Amenda concerning the manuscript have become well known: "Be sure not to hand on to anybody your quartet, in which I have made some drastic alterations. For only now have I learnt how to write quartets...." Comparison of the Amenda score with the published version reveals that Beethoven did make significant chang-

es, reducing some sections and expanding others. Importantly, the changes show Beethoven growing as a composer.

The first movement of Op. 18, No. 1, is Beethoven's first study in motivic saturation. The initial, unison outburst anticipates the later String Quartet in F minor, Op. 95, and the six-note turning motive of the first measures appears in roughly one-third of the sonata-form movement. The turning motive and all of its subsequent development seem so natural that it may be surprising to know that the motive in the finished quartet is the ninth version Beethoven sketched and the only one of the nine in triple meter. What is more astonishing is that the motive is even more abundant in the Amenda score, which Beethoven thinned extensively. After a quasi-developmental transition to the dominant, the first violin has a lilting melody that soon gives way to the turning motive and the closing material. Dramatic pauses and unexpected *sforzandi* end the exposition on C major, the dominant, allowing a smooth return to the beginning for the repeat. But after the second time through the exposition, the music leaps abruptly from C major to A major, a considerable distance from the tonic, F major. The harmonically wide-ranging development section is thick with the opening motive, and the climactic arrival at the recapitulation presents the opening unison measures, this time *fortissimo* instead of *piano*.

The D-minor second movement, marked *Adagio affettuoso ed appassionato*, is remarkable for several reasons: There are few minor-key slow movements in mature Haydn and Mozart, and the movement is in sonata form, with a brief but dense development section. Also, Beethoven introduces new material in the recapitulation and coda. Marks among Beethoven's sketches suggest the movement was inspired by the vault scene in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Marked *Allegro molto*, the Scherzo underwent seemingly subtle but truly profound changes between the completion of the manuscript Beethoven sent to Amenda and the publication of the work. The *Allegro* tempo and the mark "M" on an early sketch suggest that Beethoven initially conceived of the movement as a minuet, as does

the eight-measure theme the composer originally sketched. With the less regular 10-measure theme he finally used, as well as the *Allegro molto* tempo, Beethoven distances himself from the minuet and its aristocratic dance associations.

Beginning with a squirrely theme in the first violin, the fourth movement, *Allegro*, is a rondo, but with developmental procedures in the episodes. In the central episode, Beethoven develops a dotted-rhythm idea that appears near the end of the first episode, linking the two sections. A similar procedure occurs in the Rondo Finale of the "Emperor" concerto, written nine years later.

String Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 74, "Harp"

The year 1809 was a relatively bad one for Beethoven, although it did begin auspiciously. In October 1808, Beethoven had been offered the position of Kapellmeister at Kassel for the court of Jerome Bonaparte, Napoleon's younger brother, who had assumed the title, "King of Westphalia." On January 7, 1809, Beethoven accepted the position. Often threatening to leave Vienna, but apparently never intending to do so, Beethoven used the offer to coax from his Viennese patrons a guaranteed annual salary of 4,000 florins, slightly more than the Kassel offer. On March 1, 1809, the contract was finalized and signed by three of the composer's most important patrons: Archduke Rudolph (1,500 florins), Prince Franz Lobkowitz (700 florins) and Prince Ferdinand Kinsky (1,700 florins). Beethoven's only obligation was to reside in the Habsburg capital; he was not required to compose or perform. It was the perfect "job," but it was short-lived. Soon afterward, disaster struck.

In April 1809, Austria found itself at war with France for the fourth time in 18 years. Members of the royal family and other aristocrats, including most of Beethoven's friends and patrons, abandoned Vienna, although they thought the city should be defended. The French began bombarding Vienna on May 11; the regiments guarding the city surrendered the next day. According to Beethoven's longtime friend and student, Ferdinand Ries, Beethoven took refuge in the

home of his brother, Caspar Carl, hiding in the cellar with pillows covering his sensitive ears. The ensuing two-month occupation brought financial hardship to many as the French extracted large sums of money from the city and its inhabitants.

Beethoven was miserable that summer in Vienna. In July, he complained that he found “nothing but drums, cannons, human misery of every sort!” He was unable to visit the countryside and communication with the outside world was practically nonexistent. Like others in Vienna, he endured numerous taxes and levies, and inflation decreased the value of the annuity payments he had received before his patrons left the city.

Remarkably, Beethoven was still able to compose. In comparison to the previous decade, 1809 was a slow year, but he did produce some formidable works, including the Piano Sonata No. 26, Op. 81a (“*Das Lebewohl*”), most of the Piano Concerto No. 5, Op. 73 (“Emperor”), and the String Quartet No. 10, Op. 74 (“Harp”). All three of these pieces are in E-flat major.

Joseph Kerman has noted that, around 1808, the “enthusiasm and high daring of Beethoven’s music begins to be tempered by ever-increasing technical virtuosity. Even when the pieces are still very powerful, as is often the case, they are smoother and little safer than before.” Possibly because of this tendency, Beethoven’s desire to write symphonically for the string quartet medium, first attempted in the Op. 59 set, seems more successful in Op. 74, particularly at climactic moments.

In stark contrast to the opening of the Quartet in F major, Op. 18, No. 1, the Quartet in E-flat, Op. 74, begins with a slow introduction, and Beethoven wastes no time in challenging the listener. The first two measures witness a progression, with the help of the important pitch D-flat, from the tonic to the dominant of A-flat. It is very early in a piece to make such a move, and the nod to the flat side tends toward relaxation, unusual for Beethoven. Also, A-flat is the key of the second movement, and that harmony, as well as the note D-flat, make important appearances throughout the quartet. With the beginning of the *Allegro* tempo comes the exposition and music firmly grounded in E-flat major. However, the

note D-flat persists, most notably in the first violin’s lyric melody, which moves into an important dotted-rhythm figure in its second half. The exposition moves to the dominant through a transition featuring *pizzicato* references to the *Allegro*’s opening gesture. (These and other, seemingly ubiquitous *pizzicato* passages earned the piece its nickname, “Harp.”) The development section begins with a striking G-major chord, luxuriously scored and marked *forte*. Beethoven uses the first theme, and particularly the dotted-rhythm portion, to traverse curious key areas until arriving at the dominant. Rising scales and a sense of expansion usher in the recapitulation, which proceeds without surprises, closing on the tonic. What is a surprise is the murky, *pianississimo* passage that ensues, signaling the beginning of a coda that is longer than the exposition. Fragments of the main theme and reminiscences of the *pizzicato* transition material revisit the D-flat as the first violin spins out virtuosic gestures evocative of a violin concerto.

Set in A-flat major, the second movement, a set of variations marked *Adagio ma non troppo*, features a *cantabile* theme for the first violin. Each delicate variation brings a slightly more animated accompaniment.

Beethoven marks his Scherzo movement *Presto*. As if that were not fast enough, he marks the Trio section *Più presto quasi prestissimo*. So swiftly does Beethoven want the music to move, that he directs the players to imagine the meter is 6/8, not the written 3/4. The Trio appears twice, and the third and final Scherzo diverges from the course of the first two, nearly fading away to silence, but not before moving to the D-flat and A-flat harmonies that have been popping up since the beginning of the piece. However, the movement is soon back on track and ends on the dominant of E-flat, moving without pause to the *Allegretto con variazioni*.

Alternately loud and contrapuntal, quieter and lyrical, the six variations of the *Allegretto* make up the only Beethoven quartet finale with a theme-and-variations structure. Kerman describes the finale as variations “of the progressively decorative variety.” It is true that the first five variations do not depart from the harmonic pattern of the

theme, but the sixth does. Furthermore, the sixth contains a return of the pesky D-flat, now an insistent pedal note in the cello. In an instant, however, the D-flat moves up to a D-natural, the leading tone to E-flat, which then resolves to the tonic for the close of the movement.

String Quartet in C-sharp minor, Op. 131

In a letter of November 9, 1822, Prince Nikolaus Boris Galitzin (1794–1866) requests of Beethoven “one, two or three new quartets,” while informing the composer that he is “cultivating the cello.” In Beethoven’s tardy reply, written January 25, 1823, he sets his fee at 50 ducats and promises the first quartet by February or March. It was not to be: immersed in work on both the Ninth Symphony and the *Missa Solemnis*, Beethoven would not complete the promised quartet for two years.

As a youth, Galitzin had spent some time in Vienna, becoming an ardent admirer of Beethoven. Later, Galitzin became an honorary member of the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Society, and it was through his initiative that the first performance of the *Missa Solemnis*, Op. 123, was given at St. Petersburg on April 7, 1824. For the Prince, Beethoven had originally planned two quartets, but a wealth of ideas led to the composition of five, three of them for Galitzin. In the end, Galitzin received the dedications of the quartets Opp. 127, 132 and 130, as well as the Overture to *Die Weihe des Hauses*, Op. 124. Incidentally, Galitzin, in financial straits at the time, paid Beethoven only for Op. 127; payments for Opp. 132 and 130, and the Overture, did not materialize before the composer’s death.

Surely another impetus behind Beethoven’s return to the string quartet was the return Ignaz Schuppanzigh to Vienna in 1823, after living for seven years in St. Petersburg. Beethoven is known to have joked about the corpulent Schuppanzigh, referring to him as “Falstaff” and honoring him with the comical choral work, *Lob auf den Dicken* (Praise to the Fatness). In the last years of Beethoven’s life, Schuppanzigh led performances of the Ninth Symphony and the late quartets except Op. 131. Apparently, the C-sharp minor Quartet did not receive a public performance

until 1835, when it was played in Vienna by the Leopold Jansa quartet. However, it had been performed privately earlier, most notably to Franz Schubert on November 14, 1828, only five days before his death, in fulfillment of his dying wish to hear the piece.

Beethoven’s dedication of the quartet to Lieutenant-Marshall Baron von Stutterheim was a last-minute decision made at the expense of the textile merchant and good Johann Nepomuk Wolfmayer, to whom Beethoven had planned to dedicate the piece. In about 1818, Wolfmayer had commissioned a Requiem Mass from Beethoven and had paid the composer 100 ducats. Having never produced the requested work, Beethoven promised the dedication of the C-sharp minor Quartet Wolfmayer in compensation. However, after Beethoven’s nephew, Karl, attempted suicide in July 1826, Baron von Stutterheim found a place for Karl in his regiment, which the young man joined in January 1827. Beethoven expressed his gratitude with the dedication of the Op. 131 quartet, reserving Op. 135 for Wolfmayer.

We know Beethoven began the C-sharp minor Quartet in late 1825 because he scribbled an early form of the opening idea in a conversation book near the end of that year. By July 1826, the piece was finished; it was published by Schott, in Mainz, in June 1827, after the composer’s death.

Striking features abound in the Op. 131 Quartet, and the first of these is its seven-movement structure. The two late quartets Beethoven composed just before Op. 131—Opp. 132 and 130—are in five and six movements, respectively, but in neither one of these do the movements run continuously into one another. Beethoven begins the piece with a slow movement, something he had not done since the Op. 27, No. 2, Piano Sonata (“Moonlight”) of 1801 (also in C-sharp minor).

Perhaps most striking is that the first movement is a fugue. Fugal writing in late Beethoven is not unusual, and fugues act as development sections in Opp. 101, 106, 111, 110 and 125 (the Ninth Symphony finale), and the original finale of the Op. 130 Quartet, the *Große Fuge*, is a fugue. However, he had never begun a piece with a fugue. The traditional string quartet movement

Program Notes

cycle—sonata-form, slow movement, minuet or scherzo and finale—seems to be absent, but it is present, with the expected movements reordered and connected by shorter, additional sections.

The *Adagio* first movement begins with a slow fugue subject that begins and ends on the dominant pitch, G-sharp. Each stressed note in the fugue subject and its answer, on the subdominant, corresponds to an important key area in the movement, each of which, in turn, corresponds to the key of one of the ensuing movements. The first movement, then, acts as something of an exposition in its presentation of tonal material that is worked out later. It is a perfect example of Beethoven's penchant for organicism and the long-term realization of early implications. By setting up a conflict between pairs of notes a half-step apart (B-sharp and C-sharp, G-sharp and A), Beethoven prepares the listener for many of the musical issues that occur throughout the quartet.

As in traditional fugues, episodes alternate with entrances of the fugue subject, but Beethoven writes episodes that develop small segments of the fugue subject, lending great unity to the movement. Statements of the subject in augmentation and diminution abound, all the while crescendos, decrescendos and *sforzandi* create the “*molto espressivo*” atmosphere called for by the composer. The close of the movement is extraordinary: All four instruments sustain a C-sharp major chord for nearly two full measures and then shift to playing only C-sharps, the leading tone in D major. When the C-sharps move up to D naturals, the second movement begins.

Marked *Allegro molto vivace*, the second movement begins in D major, a half-step above the key of the preceding fugue. The form combines rondo and sonata form, in which the contrasting episodes act as modulatory passages between appearances of the lilting rondo theme. Oddly, the movement nods back to the fugue through important cadences on C-sharp and F-sharp, keys removed from D major.

The third movement, an *Allegro moderato*, is a short, recitative-like passage that links the second movement with the central *Andante*, a substantial set of variations on a simple theme. Here, again, Beethoven designs his theme around two pairs of half-steps, A and G-sharp, and D and C-sharp. Beethoven puts his 16-measure theme through six variations and a coda that plumb the depths of the theme's harmonic and rhythmic structure. It is some of the most brilliantly scored music Beethoven ever composed.

Despite its duple meter, the fifth movement is the scherzo of the quartet, beginning with what seems like a false start in the cello. Both Scherzo and Trio are recapitulated, leading to what seems to be another go-around, but go astray in fits and starts and pregnant pauses. At this point, the flavor of the movement is enhanced by a startling passage performed *sul ponticello*, with the players bowing their instruments at the bridge.

After the brief sixth movement, which functions as an introduction to the seventh movement, the *Allegro* finale begins immediately with the first theme of the weighty sonata-form structure and a return to C-sharp minor. Beethoven opens the movement with an idea that brings back the half-step pairs of the fugue—C-sharp and B-sharp, G-sharp and A—before expanding the idea into a broader theme. The secondary key area is F-sharp minor, reminiscent of the answer in the fugue, and along the way Beethoven revisits D major, the key of the second movement. Fragments of the fugue subject provide accompaniment to the finale themes. As the close of the movement approaches, the tempo slows to *Poco adagio*, and the harmony shifts to C-sharp major. The *Allegro* tempo returns, and the movement comes to an abrupt close on the tonic major, but we are not convinced that the melancholy of the opening of the quartet has been vanquished. There is no sense of triumph, as with the close of the Fifth Symphony. In the Op. 131 quartet, the shift to the major appears too abruptly and is over too quickly.

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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 in 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, New York, Berkeley and Tokyo; the Brahms cycle in London; the Schubert cycle in London,

About the Artists

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, Schubert's "Death and the Maiden" and "Rosamunde" Quartets, was released in November 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 Ms. 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 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 in the Purcell Room at 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

About the Artists

continued to perform recitals and concertos in 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 theater 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,

About the Artists

Ms. Walther regularly participates in leading chamber music festivals, including Marlboro, Santa Fe, Tanglewood, Bridgehampton and, 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. 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 an upstart violinist practicing. Since his early

youth, Mr. Fejér's 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 prepared 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.