



Amanda Tipton

23|24 SEASON



presents

TAKÁCS QUARTET

EDWARD DUSINBERRE, violin

HARUMI RHODES, violin

RICHARD O'NEILL, viola

ANDRÁS FEJÉR, cello

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN, piano

SUN, MAR 24, 3:00 pm

Hodgson Concert Hall



This concert is being recorded for future broadcast on *Performance Today*.

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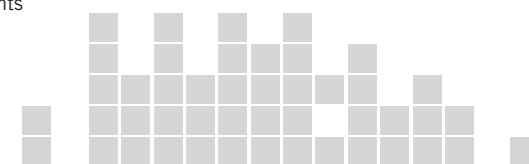
The Takács Quartet appears by arrangement with Seldy Cramer Artists, and records for Hyperion and Decca/London Records.

The Takács Quartet is Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Colorado in Boulder and are Associate Artists at Wigmore Hall, London.

www.takacsquartet.com

Please silence all mobile phones and electronic devices. Photography, video and audio recording, and texting are prohibited during the performance.

#ugapresents



PROGRAM

HUGO WOLF (1860-1903)

Italianische Serenade (Italian Serenade) [7:00]

FLORENCE PRICE (1887-1953)

Piano Quintet No. 2 in A Minor [28:00]

- I. Allegro non troppo
- II. Andante con moto
- III. Juba. Allegro
- IV. Scherzo. Allegro – Coda

INTERMISSION

ANTONIN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)

Piano Quintet in A Major, Op. 81 [40:00]

- I. Allegro, ma non tanto
- II. Dumka: Andante con moto
- III. Scherzo (Furiant): Molto vivace
- IV. Finale: Allegro

Program is subject to change.

PROGRAM NOTES

by Laurie Shulman ©2024

Italianische Serenade (Italian Serenade)

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)

Of all the great *Lieder* composers—Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Strauss, Wolf, Mahler—Hugo Wolf is surely the most esoteric. He did not make major contributions to other genres such as symphony, opera, or chamber music. Wolf's inspiration flowered brilliantly when he composed songs, and *Lieder* dominate his compositional output.

His list of works does include a surprising quantity of instrumental music; however, few of those works receive performances. The exception is the *Italian Serenade*. Although it is better known in later arrangements for string orchestra and for solo viola and chamber orchestra, the original version for string quartet is the most successful.

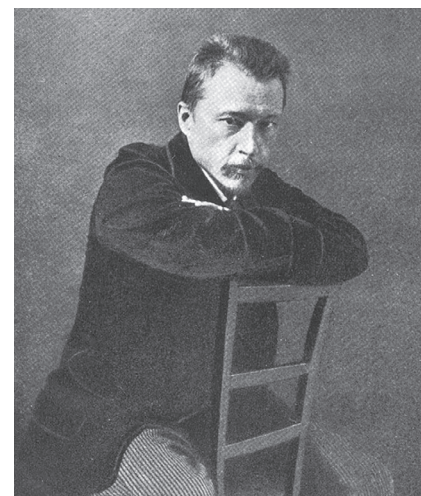
Wolf subscribed to the Lisztian-Wagnerian philosophy that traditional Western musical forms had run their course. He disdained musical academics and disparaged post-Beethoven symphonies as “the barren soil of absolute music.” Wolf's few instrumental works favor programmatic topics, generally with links to the literature that so inspired him in song. The *Italian Serenade* merges this predilection with a bow to his immediate world: the Viennese milieu of Johann Strauss II and Franz von Suppé. The lilt of Viennese popular café music dominates the Serenade, elevating the mundane and popular to the realm of art.

A single movement barely seven minutes long, the Italian Serenade falls into the

same category as Dvořák's *Cypresses* (1887)—twelve short movements arranged from love songs—and Puccini's *Crisantemi* (1890), both also for string quartet. All three works abandon the traditional multi-movement string quartet in favor of something lighter, fanciful, and with extramusical association.

Wolf casts his Serenade as a free rondo, opening with strumming. We can imagine the suitor, guitar in hand, outside the lady's window. The cello is the would-be lover, preparing to woo with trills and syncopated half-starts, clearing his throat, as it were. Presently he makes his declaration of love in successive, recitative-like statements. The other players offer commentary—or derision. Wolf incorporates unusual harmonic twists and interrupts the regularity of his phrase structure, suggesting that the serenader is, perhaps, slightly tipsy. The Serenade closes with the return of the guitar sonorities.

Biographer Frank Walker writes of the Serenade's “ironic detachment.” The critic and writer Paul Griffiths praises its “delicate playful irony and brittle speed.” The challenge for the players is to balance satire with sentiment.



Wolf composed his *Italian Serenade* in a white heat between 2 and 4 May, 1887. Five years later, he re-scored it for small orchestra. He intended to append additional movements, but never completed them. The work was published posthumously in the orchestral version, edited by Max Reger, which led to confusion as to chronology. It was long thought that Wolf had composed the orchestral version first, then reduced it for string quartet. What we hear is the original and, in its delicious and intimate glorification of the commonplace, the superior version of this delightful movement.

Piano Quintet No. 2 in A Minor Florence Price (1887-1953)

Florence Price was the first Black female composer to have a symphony performed by a major American orchestra. In the past two decades, her compositions have been getting a considerable amount of well-deserved attention.

Her story is remarkable. She performed in public at age 4 and published her first composition when she was 11. She was accepted to New England Conservatory at 16, studying composition, piano, and organ. After teaching in Little Rock and Atlanta for several years, she left the South for Chicago, pursuing additional study at Chicago Musical College and the American Conservatory. By the 1920s, she was winning awards, and in 1932 she earned first prize in the Wanamaker competition for her Symphony in E minor. Chicago Symphony conductor Frederick Stock took note and premiered that work in 1933. He also encouraged her to write a piano concerto. Marian Anderson incorporated two of Price's arrangements of spirituals

into her repertoire, enhancing Price's reputation. She continued to teach and compose until her death in 1953.

Price may have begun her Second Piano Quintet as early as 1936, but her last revisions to the piece are dated 1952, and it is considered one of her last works. The manuscript was discovered posthumously—more than half a century after Price died in 1953. In 2009, a cache of her autograph manuscripts was discovered in an old house in St. Anne, Illinois, about an hour south of Chicago; Price is known to have spent her summers there. The house's new owners did some internet research, then sent them to the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, where they were subsequently studied, organized, and transcribed by Matthew Detrick, the Artistic Director of Apollo Chamber Players. The A minor Quintet was published in 2010 by Barbara Garvey Jackson's ClarNan Editions in Fayetteville.

A major work of nearly half an hour's duration, the Quintet comprises four movements loosely related to multi-movement symphonic form; however, Price takes liberties with structure. Her first movement synthesizes traditional sonata form with the more flexible style of French organ symphonies by Alexandre Guilmant, Charles-Marie Widor, and Louis Vierne. A massive movement of about 13 minutes, the Allegro non troppo is rhapsodic, with frequent changes of tempo and the occasional mini cadenza for violin. Taryn Carvajal Harding, a scholar at Brigham Young University, has identified quotations from Price's early Organ Sonata, Op.42 (1927), from one of her songs, and from her First and Third Symphonies in this first movement.



Price's lovely Andante con moto is reminiscent of Dvořák's American works. Though in A major, its opening moments are rich with folkloric, modal melodies. The mood also recalls traditional spirituals. Its central section is unabashedly romantic, a throwback to the lush harmonies of the late 19th century. In place of the customary third movement scherzo, Price writes a *Juba*, an African dance that involves stomping and clapping. Its descendants in this country include ragtime and cakewalk. In the quintet, the piano's left hand often plays stride—alternating between a single bass note on beats one and three and a chord an octave above on beats two and four. Price incorporated *jubas* into several other compositions, notably her First and Third Symphonies. Such movements illustrate how she synthesized African-American heritage with Western European classical norms. Her call-and-response interaction between the piano and the strings is a nod to jazz's big band era. In the Quintet's *Juba*, strong syncopations will have you tapping your feet, but the songfulness of Price's melodic gift is never far off.

The Quintet concludes with a Scherzo in brisk tarantella style. Rapid key

changes distinguish this finale as the most harmonically adventuresome of the four movements, but some pentatonic melodies link it to the tradition of spirituals. Her combination of European and African-American styles marks Price as a cultural pioneer, despite the fact that she continued to write tonal music in an era when modernist tendencies were dominating classical music. Her Quintet is a welcome addition to the chamber music literature.

Piano Quintet in A Major, Op. 81 Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)

Chamber music lovers generally smile when they see that a work by Dvořák is to be performed on a program, for they know his music is accessible, melodic, well-crafted, and enduring. Indeed, one could argue quite persuasively that, despite Dvořák's undeniable success in the realms of orchestral and vocal music, his greatest achievement lies in the rich legacy of chamber works he left to us. There are dozens of examples, for all size and measure of the traditional ensembles, ranging from violin sonatas and piano trios through to string quartets and quintets. Sentimental favorites among them will certainly include the Terzetto, Op. 74, the "Dumky" Trio, Op. 90 and the "American" Quartet, Op. 96. Connoisseurs may prefer the fine Piano Quartet in E-Flat, Op. 87. But the crown jewel of them all is the incomparable Piano Quintet on this evening's program.

This work is on a par with Schubert's "Trout" Quintet and the great piano quintets of Schumann, Brahms and Franck. Within Dvořák's own *oeuvre*, it shines with the effortless polish of his classic form, artfully merged with the

Slavonic and nationalistic elements that make his music so distinctive and memorable. The Quintet was composed between August and October 1887, but its real history dates from 15 years prior. In 1872, Dvořák had begun work on a quintet for piano and strings in A Major. Dissatisfied with his efforts, he made extensive cuts, then began pasting together and writing transitional passages and other revisions in an effort to rework that piece into something satisfactory. Unable to meet his own standards, he eventually started afresh, still in the same key, to produce the masterpiece we hear tonight. Thus the catalogue of his chamber works includes two quintets in A: Op. 5 and Op. 81.

The second try clearly flowed more smoothly than the first; indeed, its path was eased by a stream of melodic genius from the late summer moment he began work on it. Alec Robertson has noted that “a joyous springtime happiness flows through the music” of the Quintet. In fact, it also blooms with the luxuriant and abundant richness of late summer: a bountiful harvest of emotions and moods, a cornucopia of luscious melodies woven together with stunning, magical skill. These four irresistible movements occasionally reveal the sad corners of the composer’s soul, often cloaked in Czech garb. Ultimately, however, Dvořák’s was a resolutely positive spirit, and the overall impact of the Quintet is upbeat: unbridled good cheer, with a healthy dash of Bohemian sentiment thrown in for good measure.

There is a spontaneity to his composition in this work that makes it very endearing; nothing seems contrived. One reason for its success is the skillful piano writing, which is

among the most effective in all Dvořák, particularly in the inner movements. Another is the skill with which he combines piano and strings, and the ecumenical manner in which he distributes his ideas among the five players.

Musically, the quintet is distinguished by a duality between major and minor. From the opening measures, where the warm, languid cello melody in A major is challenged by an aggressive response in A minor from the other strings, we feel a rhetorical pull. Probing questions prompted by such abrupt switches from major to minor throughout its four movements provide much of the narrative impetus of this music. The slow movement is entitled *Dumka* (Lament), a dance of Ukrainian origin that became quite popular in 19th-century Bohemia. *Dumky*—the Czech plural—are characterized by rhapsodic, slower sections that may be interrupted by livelier sections with a distinctly brighter mood. In this instance, Dvořák alternates two themes and sets them in a type of variations.

Next comes the Scherzo, one of the most brilliant in all chamber music. This one is a *furiant*, another Czech dance favored by Dvořák. Here he avoids the customary switches between duple and triple time, maintaining the pace of a whirling waltz. He preserves a delicacy and sprightliness more often associated with Mendelssohn’s scherzi. To close the quintet, Dvořák takes us to the Bohemian countryside, introducing yet another dance rhythm, this time a relative of the polka. The folksy spirit is Haydnesque; the personality unmistakably Dvořák, with intricate counterpoint building to a breathless, blazing and jubilant conclusion.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

TAKÁCS QUARTET

The world-renowned **Takács Quartet** is now entering its 49th season. **Edward Dusinberre**, **Harumi Rhodes** (violins), **Richard O’Neill** (viola) and **András Fejér** (cello) are excited about the 2023-2024 season that features varied projects including a new work written for them. Nokuthula Ngwenyama composed *Flow*, an exploration and celebration of the natural world. The work was commissioned by nine concert presenters throughout the USA. July sees the release of a new recording of works by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and Dvořák for Hyperion Records, while later in the season the quartet will release works by Schubert including his final quartet in G major. In Spring 2024 the ensemble will perform and record piano quintets by Price and Dvořák with long-time chamber music partner Marc-André Hamelin.

As Associate Artists at London’s Wigmore Hall the Takács will perform four concerts featuring works by Hough, Price, Janáček, Schubert, and Beethoven. During the season the ensemble will play at other prestigious European venues including Berlin, Geneva, Linz, Innsbruck, Cambridge, and St. Andrews. The Takács will appear at the Adams Chamber Music Festival in New Zealand. The group’s North American engagements include concerts in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Vancouver, Ann Arbor, Phoenix, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Portland, Cleveland, Santa Fe, and Stanford. The ensemble will perform two Bartók cycles at San Jose State University and Middlebury College and appear for the first time at the Virginia Arts Festival with pianist Olga Kern.

The members of the Takács Quartet are Christoffersen Fellows and Artists in Residence at the University of Colorado, Boulder. For the 23-24 season the quartet enter into a partnership with El Sistema Colorado, working closely with its chamber music education program in Denver. During the summer months the Takács join the faculty at the Music Academy of the West, running an intensive quartet seminar.



Kiduck Kim

The Takács has recorded for Hyperion since 2005. Their recordings are available to stream at <https://www.hyperion-streaming.co.uk>. In 2021 the Takács won a Presto Music Recording of the Year Award for their recordings of string quartets by Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn, and a Gramophone Award with pianist Garrick Ohlsson for piano quintets by Amy Beach and Elgar. Other releases for Hyperion feature works by Haydn, Schubert, Janáček, Smetana, Debussy and Britten, as well as piano quintets by César Franck and Shostakovich (with Marc-André Hamelin), and viola quintets by Brahms and Dvorák (with Lawrence Power). For their CDs on the Decca/London label, the Quartet has won three Gramophone Awards, a Grammy Award, three Japanese Record Academy Awards, Disc of the Year at the inaugural BBC Music Magazine Awards, and Ensemble Album of the Year at the Classical Brits. Full details of all recordings can be found in the Recordings section of the Quartet's website.

The Takács Quartet is known for its innovative programming. In 2021-22 the ensemble partnered with bandoneon virtuoso Julien Labro to premiere new works by Clarice Assad and Bryce Dessner, commissioned by Music Accord. In 2014 the Takács performed a program inspired by Philip Roth's novel *Everyman* with Meryl Streep at Princeton, and again with her at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto in 2015. They first performed *Everyman* at Carnegie Hall in 2007 with Philip Seymour Hoffman. They have toured 14 cities with the poet Robert Pinsky, and played regularly with the Hungarian Folk group Muzsikás.

In 2014 the Takács became the first string quartet to be awarded the Wigmore Hall Medal. In 2012, Gramophone announced that the Takács was the first string quartet to be inducted into its Hall of Fame. The ensemble also won the 2011 Award for Chamber Music and Song presented by the Royal Philharmonic Society in London.

The Takács Quartet was formed in 1975 at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest by Gabor Takács-Nagy, Károly Schranz, Gabor Ormai and András Fejér, while all four were students. The group received international attention in 1977, winning First Prize and the Critics' Prize at the International String Quartet Competition in Evian, France. The Quartet also won the gold medal at the 1978 Portsmouth and Bordeaux competitions and first prizes at the Budapest International String Quartet Competition in 1978 and the Bratislava Competition in 1981. The Quartet made its North American debut tour in 1982. Members of the Takács Quartet are the grateful beneficiaries of an instrument loan by the Drake Foundation. We are grateful to be Thomastik-Infeld Artists.

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN

"A performer of near-superhuman technical prowess" (*The New York Times*), pianist Marc-André Hamelin is known worldwide for his unrivaled blend of consummate musicianship and brilliant technique in the great works of the established repertoire, as well as for his intrepid exploration of the rarities of the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. He regularly performs around the globe with the leading orchestras and conductors of our time, and gives recitals at major concert venues and festivals worldwide.



Highlights of Mr. Hamelin's 2023-2024 season include a vast variety of repertoire performed with the Philharmonisches Orchester Hagen (Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3), Netherlands Radio Philharmonic (Reger's Piano Concerto), and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (music by Franck and Boulanger). Recital and chamber music appearances take Mr. Hamelin to Prague, Poland, Oslo, Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, London's Wigmore Hall, Amsterdam's Muziekgebouw, Portland Piano International, Cleveland Chamber Music Society, Cliburn Concerts and Brevard Music Center with Johannes Moser, and across the U.S. with the Takács Quartet. Festival appearances include Tanglewood, Le Festival de Lanaudière, Grand Teton Music Festival, Tuckamore Festival, Schubertiade, and Rockport Chamber Music Festival.

Mr. Hamelin is an exclusive recording artist for Hyperion Records, where his discography spans more than 70 albums, with notable recordings of a broad range of solo, orchestral, and chamber repertoire. In September 2023, the label released Mr. Hamelin's recording of Fauré's Nocturnes and Barcarolles, including the four-hand Dolly Suite, played with his wife, Cathy Fuller. In 2022, he released both a two-disc set of C. P. E. Bach's sonatas and rondos and a two-disc set of William Bolcom's complete rags that both received wide critical acclaim.

Mr. Hamelin has composed music throughout his career, with over 30 compositions to his name. The majority of those works—including the Etudes and Toccata on "L'homme armé," commissioned by the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition—are published by Edition Peters. Mr. Hamelin performed his Toccata on "L'homme armé" along with music by C.P.E. Bach and William Bolcom on NPR's Tiny Desk in 2023. His most recent work, his Piano Quintet, was premiered in August 2022 by himself and the celebrated Dover Quartet at La Jolla Music Society.

Mr. Hamelin makes his home in the Boston area with his wife, Cathy Fuller, a producer and host at Classical WCRB. Born in Montreal, he is the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the German Record Critics' Association, and has received 7 Juno Awards, 11 Grammy nominations, and the 2018 Jean Gimbel Lane Prize in Piano Performance from Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music. In December 2020, he was awarded the Paul de Hueck and Norman Walford Career Achievement Award for Keyboard Artistry from the Ontario Arts Foundation. Mr. Hamelin is an Officer of the Order of Canada, a Chevalier de l'Ordre national du Québec, and a member of the Royal Society of Canada.