

# Takács Quartet

Dvořák, Hough and Schumann

Sunday, Jan. 9, 4 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 10, 7:30 p.m.

Grusin Music Hall

## Program

### String Quartet No. 10, Op. 51

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

- I. Allegro ma non troppo
- II. *Dumka*. Andante con moto — Vivace
- III. *Romanza*. Andante con moto
- IV. *Finale*. Allegro assai

### String Quartet No.1 (Les Six Rencontres) 2021

Stephen Hough (b. 1961)

- I. Au boulevard
- II. Au parc
- III. À l'hôtel
- IV. Au théâtre
- V. À l'église
- VI. Au marché

— Intermission —

### Piano Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 44

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

- I. Allegro brillante
- II. *In modo d'una marcia*. Un poco largamente.
- III. *Scherzo*. Molto vivace
- IV. Allegro ma non troppo

with David Korevaar, piano

---

#### PLEASE NOTE

- Masks are required in public indoor spaces on the CU Boulder campus, regardless of vaccination status.
  - Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the house manager.
  - Photography and video recordings of any type are strictly prohibited during the performance.
  - Smoking is not permitted anywhere. CU Boulder is a smoke-free campus.
-

## Program notes

*Notes for Dvořák and Schumann works  
by Marc Shulgold*

*Notes for Hough work by Stephen Hough*

### String Quartet No. 10, Op. 51 “Slavic”

*Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)*

The music world discovered Dvořák in 1878 with his enticing set of *Slavonic Dances*, published thanks to the enthusiastic prodding of Brahms. The talented Czech composer had already established himself as a fan of folk music with his charming collection of *Moravian Dances*, so it's no surprise that he would soon be sought after by musicians anxious to pry more ethnic-flavored works from him. Which brings us to Jean Becker, first violinist of the renowned Florentine Quartet, who commissioned Dvořák to produce a work for the ensemble “in the Slavic style.” The result was Op. 51, the tenth string quartet, completed in a few months and unveiled at a private performance in July 1879.

Folk tunes and dances predominate in this sunny composition. Just to be clear about that term “Slavic,” we’re talking Western and Southern Slavic styles—referring to Czech, Polish, Croatian, Bulgarian and other cultures from those regions—rather than Eastern Slavic, particularly Russian and Ukrainian. East European dance pulses and tunes appear everywhere. We sample the gentle Bohemian rhythms of the polka, heard in the opening *Allegro*, and the mournful strains of the second movement’s *Dumka* in G minor—the latter’s melody introduced in a violin-violata duet with guitar-like strumming from the cello. As folk traditions dictate, the *Dumka*’s achingly lovely melody is quickly chased off by a cheery middle section in G major, built on the bounce of the furiant, a rhythmically tricky Bohemian dance. The finale features a giddy Bohemian fiddle tune known as the *skačna*, reminiscent of an Irish reel.

That said, this work—the first of Dvořák’s mature string quartets (five more would follow)—is not merely a collection of sweet dance ditties. There is also a faithful approach to the technique of composition here. The first movement immutably follows the structure of sonata form, while the finale is a clearly delineated rondo, one that even includes some old-fashioned counterpoint—all displaying the composer’s nimble juggling of

classical discipline and folksy spontaneity. Apart from this adherence to the rules is Dvořák’s unfailing gift for pure melody, best displayed in Op. 51’s slow movement, a lovely, effortlessly flowing *Romanze*.

### String Quartet No.1 (Les Six Rencontres) 2021

*Stephen Hough (b. 1961)*

This piece was conceived after an invitation from the Takács Quartet: to write a companion work for a recording of the quartets of Ravel and Dutilleux. It was a thrilling if daunting challenge, and it gave me an immediate idea as I considered these two colossi who strode across the length of the 20th century—not so much what united their musical languages but what was absent from them, not to mention the missing decades between the Ravel Quartet of 1903 and Dutilleux’s *Ainsi la Nuit* from the mid-1970s.

The term *Les Six*, referring to the group of six French composers most prominently active around the interwar years, evokes a flavor more than a style—and it’s a flavor rarely found in the music of Ravel and Dutilleux. In *Les Six* it’s not so much a lack of seriousness, although seeing life through a burlesque lens is one recurring ingredient; rather it’s an aesthetic review of the world after the catastrophe of the Great War. Composers like Poulenc and Milhaud were able to discover poignance in the rough and tumble of daily human life in a way which escaped the fastidiousness of those other two composers. Stravinsky, one of the godfathers of *Les Six*, supposedly referred to Ravel as “the most perfect, Swiss watchmaker.” Poulenc and his party could never be accused of being clock-watchers; their social hours were dimly lit by sputtering candles as the parties continued through the night, with Jean Cocteau or Picasso (other godfathers) opening yet another bottle of Bordeaux.

The subtitle for my Quartet No. 1 has in it a pun and a puzzle: the six movements as an echo of *Les Six*, although there are no quotes or direct references from those composers; and “encounters” which are unspecified, their phantom occurrence leaving only a trace in the memory of the places where the meetings might have taken place.

### I. Au boulevard

Stravinskian spikes elbow across the four instruments, with jagged accents, darting arpeggios and bracing white-note harmonies. Indeed, no sharps or flats appear until bar 35 when the main theme is suddenly transformed into technicolor for the central section, blushed with sentiment, and exactly half-tempo.

### II. Au Parc

Under a pizzicato accompaniment a gentle, melancholy melody floats and is passed around the players in a haze of decorative variations, the central section warming the trope like vermouth around a bitter olive.

### III. A l'hôtel

A bustling *fugato*—its short subject incorporating repeated notes, an arpeggio and a scale—patters in metronomic conversation until it suddenly finds itself swept off its feet on a decadent dance floor. It is soon exhausted and the opening material returns, now inverted and condensed, until a hectic coda hurries the theme through many keys with offbeat, snapping chords in pursuit.

### IV. Au théâtre

A *spiccatissimo* skeleton of a motive dances in a recurring harmonic sequence, decorated with each repetition in more and more lurid colors, smeared with lipstick *glissandos*. Then comes a sudden change of mood with the viola's plangent *amoroso* melody pushing the music forward to a splashing climax. The swirls of arpeggios segue to ferocious tremolos underneath the first violin's *piangendo* statement of the opening theme. As the music totters on the edge of despair there is a meltdown into a coda of consolation where the viola reimagines the opening skeleton theme in smooth, consoling D-flat major.

### V. A l'église

We remain in D-flat major for this serene hymn which is sewn together into one four-part seam across the instruments—with a glance perhaps back to Ravel's teacher Gabriel Faure.

### VI. A la marché

This whole movement energetically tosses material from one player to the other in a *moto perpetuo* of exuberance. Material from the rest of the piece reappears (most prominently the harmonic progression from the central section of the second

movement) until the work ends as it began with the first movement's Stravinskian spikes, interrupted in the penultimate bar with a *feroce* quote of the opening of the third movement.

## Piano Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 44

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

It's possible to hear Schumann's magnificent Piano Quintet without an awareness of the composer's ongoing battle with his fragile personality. Yet, our understanding of the joy and pain he experienced adds immeasurably as we journey through Op. 44, knowing that the dramatic story of his life will always be inseparable from his music. That said, listeners can simply bask in the music's grandeur without considering the man and his emotional state in 1842, his "Year of Chamber Music." Typical of Schumann, it was a period of furious productivity (various works for trio, quartet and quintet). He sketched out the entire Piano Quintet in a mere five days in September, then spent a few weeks polishing it up. In the first private and public performances of the work, it was consistently praised by all who heard it (except for the curmudgeonly Franz Liszt), even though its success couldn't erase stretches of Schumann's depression.

After his marriage to Clara Wieck in 1840, the composer wrote reams of songs and piano pieces before shifting to intimate instrumental music. Much has been written about the Piano Quintet's historical significance, how it defined a new genre (the few earlier keyboard quintets usually included a double bass). Yes, its combination of piano and traditional string quartet proved an inspiration to Brahms, Dvořák, Franck and others who followed. (By the way, Schumann had been simultaneously working on his Piano Quartet, Op. 47, also in E-flat.) What's most important in the quintet is the unprecedented orchestral sound that explodes immediately with those first four commanding chords, revealing a confidence that continues unabated. And still, Schumann couldn't overcome his anguish.

We can understand his self-doubt at the fact that it was Clara who was the star of the household. It was Clara who conquered Europe with her brilliant pianism, repeatedly touring the continent, leaving Robert at home to work and look after the children (she would give birth to eight). Ironic that it would be Clara who became the quintet's champion,

performing it everywhere long after her husband's death. Accepting criticism never came easy for the composer. A year after his friend Mendelssohn had died, Schumann argued vehemently at the dinner table with Liszt, who dismissed the quintet as "too Leipzig-like"—a regrettable poke at Mendelssohn, who had heroically substituted for Clara at a private run-through, sight-reading his part when she felt too ill to play. Incidentally, it was Mendelssohn who offered some suggestions at that hearing in December of 1843, including the bold idea of inserting a second *Trio* section in the *Scherzo*.

Apart from its groundbreaking instrumentation, Op. 44 contains a wealth of new ideas and an instinctive understanding of how to balance keyboard and strings. All five players remain involved, as one memorable theme follows another. Particularly innovative (in addition to those two *Trio* segments in the *Scherzo*) is the unfolding drama of the second movement, marked "in the mode of a march." Funereal in its minor-key sadness, the theme suddenly turns angry—perhaps symbolic of Schumann's perpetual mood swings—before resolving back into quiet grief. Another touch of striking originality is the unexpected return of those four opening chords near the end of the finale, here presented in a brief fugue.

There is greatness on every page, something that Clara recognized even before Op. 44 was finished. In September 1842, she wrote in her diary, "(Robert) has all but completed a quintet, which, from what I have overheard, appears to be another splendid work—a work full of power and freshness!"

## About the performers

Recent winner of the Gramophone Classical Music Awards 2021 chamber category, the world-renowned Takács Quartet is now entering its 47th season. Edward Dusinberre, Harumi Rhodes (violins); Richard O'Neill (viola); and András Fejér (cello) are excited to bring to fruition several innovative projects for the 2021-22 season. With bandoneon/accordion virtuoso Julien Labro, the group will perform new works composed for them by Clarice Assad and Bryce Dessner throughout the U.S. This season also marks the world premiere of a new quartet written for the Takács by

Stephen Hough, *Les Six Rencontres*. The Takács will record this extraordinary work for Hyperion Records, in combination with quartets by Ravel and Dutilleux.

During the last year, the Takács marked the arrival of Grammy-winning violist Richard O'Neill by making two new recordings for Hyperion. Quartets by Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel and Felix Mendelssohn were released in the Fall of 2021, to be followed in May 2022 by a disc of Haydn's Opp. 42, 77 and 103.

The Takács Quartet continues its role in 2021-22 as associate artists at London's Wigmore Hall, performing four concerts there this season. In addition to many concerts in the U.K., the ensemble will play at prestigious European venues including the Paris Philharmonie, Berlin Konzerthaus, and Teatro Della Pergola, Florence. The Takács will perform throughout North America, including concerts in New York, Boston, Washington, Princeton, Ann Arbor, Berkeley, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Vancouver, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Cleveland and Portland.

The Takács records for Hyperion Records. The ensemble recently won a Gramophone Classical Music Award 2021 in the chamber category for their recording of quintets by Amy Beach and Elgar with pianist Garrick Ohlsson. The CD also won a Presto Classical Recording of the Year. Other discs for Hyperion include string quartets by Haydn, Schubert, Janáček, Smetana, Debussy and Britten, as well as piano quintets by César Franck and Shostakovich (with Marc-André Hamelin), 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 at [takacsquartet.com/recordings](http://takacsquartet.com/recordings).

In 2014 the Takács became the first string quartet to be awarded the Wigmore Hall Medal. The Medal, inaugurated in 2007, recognizes major international artists who have a strong association with the Hall. Recipients include Andras Schiff, Thomas Quasthoff, Menahem Pressler and Dame Felicity Lott. In 2012, Gramophone announced

that the Takács was the first string quartet to be inducted into its Hall of Fame, along with such legendary artists as Jascha Heifetz, Leonard Bernstein and Dame Janet Baker. The ensemble also won the 2011 Award for Chamber Music and Song presented by the Royal Philharmonic Society in London.

The Takács Quartet is known for innovative programming. The ensemble performed a program inspired by Philip Roth's novel *Everyman* with Meryl Streep at Princeton in 2014, 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, collaborate regularly with the Hungarian Folk group Muzsikás, and in 2010 they collaborated with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival and David Lawrence Morse on a drama project that explored the composition of Beethoven's last quartets.

Based in Boulder at the University of Colorado, the members of the Takács Quartet are Christoffersen Faculty Fellows. 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 are on the faculty at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, where they run an intensive summer string quartet seminar, and Visiting Fellows at the Guildhall School of Music, 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. 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 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.

## David Korevaar, piano

Hailed for his "wonderfully warm, pliant, spontaneous playing" by the Washington Post, award-winning pianist David Korevaar is in demand as a soloist, chamber musician and collaborator. Korevaar has performed and given master classes throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, and Central and South America. Recent highlights include recitals and master classes in Taipei, and a tour of Brazil, with recitals and master classes in São Paulo, Porto Alegre, Rio de Janeiro, João Pessoa, Recife and Natal. He has also concertized and given master classes in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan as part of the U.S. State Department's Cultural Envoy program and taught at the Afghanistan National Institute of Music (ANIM) in Kabul.

Korevaar's active career includes solo performances with the Rochester Philharmonic, Colorado Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Japan's Shonan Chamber Orchestra, Brazil's Goiania Symphony, and with acclaimed conductors Guillermo Figueroa, Per Brevig, Stanisław Skrowaczewski and Jorge Mester. His performance of John Cage's Concerto for Prepared Piano and Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Paul Zukofsky was praised by the New York Times "as admirably projected in the devoted and lovely performance of David Korevaar." David was honored to work with Cage to prepare the concerto.

A passionate and committed collaborator, Korevaar is a founding member of the Boulder Piano Quartet, currently in residence at The Academy in Boulder, for which he curates a chamber music series. He performs regularly with the Takács Quartet, and recently appeared with them on the Great Performers Series at New York's Lincoln Center. Korevaar performs and records with distinguished colleagues including the New York Philharmonic Ensembles; violinists Charles Wetherbee, Anne Akiko Myers, Vadim Gluzman, Chee-Yun, Harumi Rhodes, Edward Dusingher, Emi Ohi Resnick and Philip Quint; violists Geraldine Walther and Matthew Dane; cellists David Requiro and Peter Wyrick; flutists Alexa Still and Christina Jennings; and the Shanghai, Manhattan and Colorado Quartets. He was a founding member of the Prometheus Piano Quartet, and was a long-time member of the Clavier Trio whose artistry was recognized

as “exceptional, impressive, fresh and inspired.” Korevaar has appeared on some of the country’s most distinguished chamber music series at Carnegie Hall, the Library of Congress, Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Phillips Collection, Spivey Hall, the 92nd Street Y, the Gardner Museum, the Krannert Center, the Ordway Theater, Kennedy Center, Davies Symphony Hall and for the La Jolla Chamber Music Society, among others.

Korevaar’s most recent addition to his extensive discography of nearly 40 titles is a highly acclaimed disc of world premiere recordings of piano music by the largely forgotten Italian impressionist composer Luigi Perrachio.

“Perrachio’s works require a pianist with virtuosic technique and an artist’s sensitivity for producing a wide spectrum of tone color. David Korevaar is the right pianist for these pieces” wrote American Record Guide. This fall also saw the release of two recordings with violinist Charles Wetherbee, including works by Iranian-American composer Reza Vali issued on MSR, and a Naxos disc of the three violin sonatas by Russian/German composer Paul Juon. He returns to the recording studio this season to record Richard Danielpour’s *The Celestial Circus* for two pianos and three percussionists with pianist Angelina Gadeliya. Other recent releases include the third volume of Lowell Liebermann’s piano music, a compelling Chopin recital, and world premiere recordings of music for violin and piano by Hungarian-born Parisian composer Tibor Harsányi with Charles Wetherbee. Korevaar is well known for his Bach recordings, including the *Six Partitas*, *Goldberg Variations*, and the two books of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*—recognized as a Critic’s Choice by American Record Guide. Along with recordings of music by Beethoven, Brahms, Fauré and Ravel, he has recorded three discs dedicated to the solo and chamber music of Paul Hindemith, solo piano music by Ernst von Dohnányi, and rarely heard treasures by French composers Louis Aubert and Jean Roger-Ducasse from the University of Colorado’s Ricardo Viñes Piano Music Collection. His long association with the American composer Lowell Liebermann has resulted in five recordings to date, including three collections of solo piano music, an album with flutist Alexa Still, and a chamber music compilation with clarinetist Jon Manasse, members of the Boulder Piano Quartet, and baritone Patrick Mason.

Korevaar is dedicated to championing the works of contemporary composers and has performed and recorded works by Lera Auerbach, David Carlson, Robert Xavier Rodriguez, Paul Schonfield, Aaron Jay Kernis, George Rochberg, George Crumb, Stephen Jaffe, and performed the New York premiere of *Harrison’s Clocks* by Harrison Birtwistle. His long-standing advocacy of the music of Lowell Liebermann led to a recent residency by the composer at the University of Colorado. He regularly performs works by University of Colorado colleagues Michael Theodore, Mike Barnett and Carter Pann, as well as works by aspiring and established composers in his mission to inspire future generations.

Balancing an active performing schedule along with teaching at the University of Colorado Boulder, Korevaar is a Distinguished Professor, only the second to bear that title in the College of Music, and holds the Peter and Helen Weil fellowship in piano. He was also honored by the University in 2016 as a Distinguished Research Lecturer, a first in the College of Music.

In addition to being a gifted pianist, Korevaar, who studied composition with David Diamond, has composed works for solo piano, chamber ensemble, and a piano concerto for full or chamber orchestra. His transcriptions of Franz Liszt’s *Symphonic Poems Festklänge* and *Orpheus* can be heard on Helicon Classical’s release of Liszt’s *Orchestral Transcriptions for Solo Piano* with Korevaar at the piano.

Highlights of Korevaar’s media credits include appearances on All Things Considered, Morning Edition, NPR, Performance Today, St. Paul Sunday, WQXR, WDAV, TPR, KFAC, WGBH, WNYC, and Colorado Public Radio.

Korevaar’s honors include the Richard French award from the Juilliard School, honoring his doctoral document on Ravel’s *Miroirs*, top prizes from the University of Maryland William Kapell International Piano Competition and the Peabody-Mason Foundation, as well as the prize for best performance of French music at the Robert Casadesus International Competition. He was also a winner of Young Concert Artists as a member of the group Hexagon.

David Korevaar began piano studies at age six

in San Diego, California, with Sherman Storr—an alumnus and former faculty member of the CU College of Music. At age 13 he became a student of the great American virtuoso Earl Wild. By age 20 he had earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from the Juilliard School, where he continued his studies with Earl Wild. He completed his Doctor of Musical Arts at the Juilliard School as a student of Abbey Simon. A very important mentor and teacher was French pianist Paul Doguereau, who had been a student of Egon Petri, and studied the music of Fauré and Debussy with Fauré's student Roger-Ducasse, and the music of Ravel with the composer.

Prior to joining the faculty of the University of Colorado in 2000, Korevaar taught at the Westport School of Music in Connecticut as Artist-Teacher. He is a Shigeru Kawai artist.

When not performing and teaching David enjoys reading, as well as running and hiking in the Colorado mountains. [davidkorevaar.com](http://davidkorevaar.com)



ARTIST  
SERIES



**Kronos Quartet**  
Music for Change

Jan. 13, 2022

Macky Auditorium

Tickets start at \$16 at [cupresents.org](http://cupresents.org)

Discounts for groups, youth, seniors, students and  
CU employees at [cupresents.org/discounts](http://cupresents.org/discounts)

CU ★ PRESENTS



University of Colorado Boulder