



**TAKÁCS  
QUARTET**

# **Takács Quartet**

## **Barber, Rorem, Bartók and Grieg**

**Sunday, Feb. 10, 4 p.m.**  
**Monday, Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m.**

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### Takács Quartet

Edward Dusinberre and Harumi Rhodes, violins

Geraldine Walther, viola

András Fejér, cello

## Program

### Dover Beach, Op. 3

I. Andante, un poco mosso

Samuel Barber  
(1910-1981)

*Andrew Garland, baritone*

### Mourning Scene from Samuel

I. Andantino moderato

Ned Rorem  
(b. 1923)

*Andrew Garland, baritone*

### String Quartet No. 6, Sz. 114

I. Mesto – Piu mosso pesante

II. Mesto – Marcia

III. Mesto – Burletta

IV. Mesto

Béla Bartók  
(1881-1945)

## Intermission

### String Quartet in G minor, Op. 27

I. Un poco Andante – Allegro molto ed agitato

II. Romanze – Andantino

III. Intermezzo – Allegro molto marcato

IV. Finale – Lento – Presto al Saltarello

Edvard Grieg  
(1843-1907)

# Texts

## Dover Beach

Matthew Arnold (1822-1888)

The sea is calm tonight.  
The tide is full, the moon lies fair  
Upon the straits; on the French coast, the light  
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,  
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.  
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!  
Only, from the long line of spray  
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,

Listen! you hear the grating roar  
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,  
At their return, up the high strand,  
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,  
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring  
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago  
Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought  
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow  
Of human misery; we  
Find also in the sound a thought,  
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith  
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.  
But now I only hear  
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,  
Retreating, to the breath  
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear  
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true  
To one another! for the world, which seems  
To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
So various, so beautiful, so new,  
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;  
And we are here as on a darkling plain  
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,  
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

## Mourning Scene

Text from 2 Samuel 1:19-27  
(King James Version)

The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places:  
how are the mighty fallen!

Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets  
of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines  
rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised  
triumph.

Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew,  
neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of  
offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely  
cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not  
been anointed with oil.

From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the  
mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and  
the sword of Saul returned not empty.

Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in  
their lives, and in their death they were not divided:  
they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger  
than lions.

Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who  
clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put  
on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!  
O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places.

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:  
very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to  
me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war  
perished!

# Program notes

By Marc Shulgold

## Dover Beach, Op. 3

Matthew Arnold's 1851 poem *Dover Beach* begins innocently enough, describing a calm sea and moonlit night, as observed by two lovers. (This was written during Arnold's honeymoon with his bride Frances at Dover.) Soon, however, the English writer brings us into a place of darkness, finally concluding that the world "hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light..." and ending with the famous line about a "darkling plain ... where ignorant armies clash by night."

Considering Barber's melancholic personality, the poem seems an appropriate choice for the young composer, who in early 1931 was a 19-year-old student at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. (He'd entered the school at 14.) Unlike those of his age who typically harbor youthful optimism and exuberance, Barber even then was a bit of a quiet loner. Perhaps he was drawn to the poem, knowing that Arnold (1822-1888) was also a young man when he wrote it. It's more likely the evocative quality of the text's images fired his imagination.

In fact, Barber is not alone in his attraction to the poem. In 1932, Ralph Vaughan Williams gave a lecture at Bryn Mawr College, not far from Philadelphia, with Barber in attendance. Afterward, the young student met the renowned English composer and sang *Dover Beach* for him. (Barber possessed an excellent baritone.) Vaughan Williams was impressed, noting, "I tried several times to set *Dover Beach*, but you really got it!" (Dominick Argento would create a choral version of the poem in 2003, as had American composer Edwin Fissinger in 1990.)

Though Barber accompanied himself on piano at this impromptu performance, he had set the work for baritone and string quartet—an ideal instrumental choice, particularly in the gentle opening passages that conjure images of waves rolling over the pebble-strewn beach at Dover, a ferry port in Kent that faces France. Just as the sea's constant motion reminds us of Nature's unstoppable forces, Arnold's words—and Barber's music—suggest a sense of sad acceptance.

Even a subtle shift midway through from D minor to a more optimistic D major fades out quickly, as the minor key returns with "Ah, love, let us be true / To one another!" Notice that, although

Arnold's text does not end with a reference to the rolling tide so vividly detailed in the opening lines, Barber's setting does recall the gentle waves offered by the strings as the music begins. Barber was proud of the blend of words and music in this early work. "*Dover Beach*," he noted in 1979, "is a very difficult piece because nobody is boss, so to speak." The text, he observed, has held up well through the years: "(It's) one of the few Victorian poems which continue to hold their stature."

The same can be said for Barber's brilliant setting.

## Mourning Scene from Samuel

A native of Richmond, Indiana, and now a resident of New York City, Rorem has long been lauded as perhaps this country's finest composer of art songs. His output also includes three symphonies, four piano concertos, various works for orchestra, ten operas, some ballets, plus numerous pieces for chorus.

There's not a lot of written material on his *Mourning Scene* (completed in Tanglewood, Massachusetts, in July 1947 and published nine years later), but it's easy to surmise that this somber work for baritone and string quartet was influenced by Barber's *Dover Beach*—perhaps inspired by it. Here, the text is biblical, drawn from the second book of Samuel (chapter 1, verses 19-27). In it, we hear David's lament for the deaths of his dear friend Jonathan and King Saul in a battle against the Philistines. (Jonathan died in combat, while Saul, seeing defeat, committed suicide.)

Rorem's setting vividly captures David's mourning, beginning with a sad cello solo. The dark mood is brightened somewhat as David praises those two men (both "were lovely and pleasant in their lives"), but the sadness returns with the reprise of the familiar phrase, "How the mighty have fallen." Before voicing that expression again, David notes that Jonathan's love for him was unsurpassed. With Saul's death, David is crowned King of Judah and later King of Israel as told in this second book of Samuel—but then, that's another story.

## String Quartet No. 6, Sz. 114

As 1939 unfolded in its march toward conflagration, Bartók's world began to crumble. His strenuous opposition to the growing threat of Nazi Germany (and a similar rejection of the fascist

leadership in Hungary) brought sadness and fear—emotions that found voice in his music.

The sixth quartet reflects the tumult and terror of 1939 and would become his final European work. As war broke out, he left his safe haven in Switzerland (where work on the final quartet had begun) and returned to Budapest, where his mother was ailing, and where he would complete the quartet. With the explosion of World War II in 1940, Bartók and his wife fled to America, his home for the final five years of his life.

The sixth quartet was commissioned by his friend, the violinist Zoltán Székely, then a resident of Holland—but the two lost contact amid the chaos of 1939, much to the composer's dismay. Soon after landing in New York, Bartók hooked up with the Viennese-based Kolisch Quartet, whose members had similarly fled the war. On Jan. 20, 1941, the sixth quartet was premiered by the Kolisch, who were honored with a heart-felt, if reluctant, dedication. Each of the four movements reflects the violence and inescapable sadness of Europe's destruction.

Bartók's early sketches indicate his intention to conclude with a brisk finale brimming with folk color. Instead, as the composer dealt with his grief over the war and his mother's illness, the last movement became an agonizing sigh of resignation. (His mother died a month after the work's completion.) The quartet is the only one of the six that follows the classical tradition of four movements—the others range from one to five. Also unique is the use of a recurring theme, heard at the start of each movement. Marked *Mesto* (meaning sad), this mournful chromatic melody is first stated alone by the viola; in the *Marcia*, it's introduced by the cello aided by violin; in the following *Burletta*, the theme grows to full flower and continues for the duration of the concluding *Molto tranquillo*.

Though the quartet is not overtly programmatic, its two inner movements seem to point an angry finger at the horrors of war. The half-crazed *glissandi* (up-and-down slides), furious strummings and marching pulse of the second movement are frightening and mind-numbing. The madness continues in the *Burletta* (Burlesque), with its nervous out-of-tune intervals and drunken, dance-like episodes. A brief trio brings an uneasy calm, quickly broken by an extended segment in *pizzicato*. Various diabolical effects near the end cement an image of the world at its lowest point—only to be brought even lower by the tragic final

movement. Here, one is left clinging to long-lost memories of peace and contentment.

### String Quartet in G minor, Op. 27

Listening to this energetic, endlessly tuneful work, it comes as a surprise to learn that Grieg felt insecure in his abilities as he labored on the quartet in 1877. "Day by day I am becoming more dissatisfied with myself," he wrote. "(T)hough it seems to me that I have ideas, they neither soar nor take form when I proceed to the working out of something big."

As he struggled, he refused to lower his expectations for this, his only completed quartet. (A first attempt, from 1862, is lost, and a third go at it in 1891 resulted in only two movements.) For Grieg, this was always intended to be a major work. In 1878, as he was nearing completion, the goal of creating a piece with big ideas had been achieved. The composer wrote to a friend that the quartet "is not intended to deal in trivialities for petty minds. It aims at breadth, flight of imagination and above all sonority for all the instruments."

So, how did he escape the clutches of self-doubt, working in a tiny composing cottage on a fjord below his home in Lofthus, not far from Bergen? For inspiration, he turned to a song he'd written as the first of six in Op. 25, using poems by Henrik Ibsen. Titled *Spillemaend* (Fiddler's Song), it tells of a minstrel's encounter with Hulder, a deceitful water sprite who provides the gift of music to those seeking it—but robs them of lifelong happiness.

The "spiritual struggle," as Grieg described his efforts on the quartet, appears throughout the work, represented by the song's opening phrase, sounded in double stops and unison as the opening movement begins. It then speeds up in the ensuing *Allegro*, reappearing in succeeding movements and culminating in a grand unison quoting as the quartet concludes. There is much to admire here: the lovely simplicity of the *Romanze* (interrupted by an aggressive middle section), the folk-like charm of the *Intermezzo* and the dizzying energy of an Italian dance known as a *Saltarello* in the finale. An interesting footnote: When Op. 27 was premiered by the Robert Heckmann Quartet in Cologne, Germany, on Oct. 29, 1878, the concert featured a selection of Grieg's songs. Not included, however, was *Spillemaend*.

# About the Takács Quartet

The Takács Quartet, now entering its 44th season, is renowned for the vitality of its interpretations. The New York Times recently lauded the ensemble for “revealing the familiar as unfamiliar, making the most traditional of works feel radical once more,” and the Financial Times described a recent concert at the Wigmore Hall: “Even in the most fiendish repertoire these players show no fear, injecting the music with a heady sense of freedom. At the same time, though, there is an uncompromising attention to detail: neither a note nor a bow-hair is out of place.” Based in Boulder at the University of Colorado, Edward Dusinger, Harumi Rhodes (violins), Geraldine Walther (viola) and András Fejér (cello) perform 80 concerts a year worldwide.

During the 2018-19 season, the ensemble will continue its four annual concerts as associate artists at London's Wigmore Hall. In August 2018, the quartet appeared at the Edinburgh, Snape Proms, Menton and Rheingau festivals. Other European venues later in the season include Berlin, Cologne, Baden-Baden, Bilbao and the Bath Mozartfest. The quartet will perform extensively in the U.S., including two concerts at New York's Lincoln Center and at the University of Chicago, Princeton and Berkeley. A tour with Garrick Ohlsson will culminate in a recording for Hyperion of the Elgar and Amy Beach piano quintets. The latest Takács CD, to be released in summer 2019, features Dohnányi's two piano quintets and his second string quartet, with pianist Marc-André Hamelin.

In 2014, the Takács became the first string quartet to win the Wigmore Hall Medal. The medal, inaugurated in 2007, recognizes major international artists who have a strong association with the hall. Recipients so far include Andras Schiff, Thomas Quasthoff, Menahem Pressler and Dame Felicity Lott. In 2012, Gramophone announced that the Takács was the only string quartet to be inducted into its first 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 performed Philip Roth's “Everyman” program with Meryl Streep at Princeton in 2014 and again with her at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto in 2015. The program was conceived in close collaboration with Philip Roth. The quartet is known for such innovative programming. They first performed “Everyman” at Carnegie Hall in 2007 with Philip Seymour Hoffman. The quartet has toured 14 cities with the poet Robert Pinsky, collaborates regularly with the Hungarian Folk group Muzsikás, and in 2010 collaborated with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival and David Lawrence Morse on a drama project that explored the composition of Beethoven's last quartets. Aspects of the quartet's interests and history are explored in Edward Dusinger's book, *Beethoven for a Later Age: The Journey of a String Quartet*, which takes the reader inside the life of a string quartet, melding music history and memoir as it explores the circumstances surrounding the composition of Beethoven's quartets. The Takács Quartet records for Hyperion Records, and their releases for that label include string quartets by Haydn, Schubert, Janáček, Smetana, Debussy and Britten, as well as piano quintets by Franck and Shostakovich (with Marc-André Hamelin), and viola quintets by Brahms (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.

The members of the Takács Quartet are Christoffersen Faculty Fellows at the University of Colorado Boulder. The quartet has helped 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.

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. The quartet made its North American debut tour in 1982. After several changes of personnel, the most recent addition is second violinist Harumi Rhodes, following Károly Schranz's retirement in April 2018. In 2001, the Takács Quartet was awarded the Order of Merit of the Knight's Cross of the Republic of Hungary, and in March 2011 each member of the quartet was awarded the Order of Merit Commander's Cross by the President of the Republic of Hungary.

# Guest artist: Andrew Garland, baritone

Baritone Andrew Garland is widely recognized as a leader in recital work with dozens of performances around the country including Carnegie Hall with pianist Warren Jones and programs of modern American songs all over the United States and in Canada. Jones, Marilyn Horne, Steven Blier, a number of American composers and several major music publications all endorse him as a highly communicative singer leading the way for the song recital into the 21st Century.

He brings his highly communicative style to the concert stage with orchestras including the Atlanta Symphony, Boston Baroque, The Handel and Haydn Society, Boston Youth Symphony, National Philharmonic, Albany Symphony, Washington Master Chorale at the Kennedy Center and National Chorale at Lincoln Center.

Garland is a regular with the New York Festival of Song (NYFOS) and has given multiple recitals at Carnegie Hall, the Ravinia festival as well as Vocal Arts DC, Marilyn Horne Foundation, The Bard Festival, Camerata Pacifica, Andre-Turp Society in Montreal, Voce at Pace, Huntsville Chamber Music Guild, Fort Worth Opera, Seattle Opera, Fanfare in Hammond, LA, Cincinnati Matinee Musicale, Cincinnati Song Initiative, Tuesday Morning Music Club and dozens of college music series around the country. In 2014 he was the featured recitalist for the NATS National convention where that organization's president declared him "the next Thomas Hampson."

His latest solo CD *American Portraits* (with Donna Loewy, piano) went to number one on Amazon classical. Garland has five other recordings on the Telarc, Naxos, Roven Records and Azica Labels.

During the 2016-2017 season, Garland performed in the world premiere of William Bolcom's *Dinner at Eight* with Minnesota Opera, joins the Houston Symphony for the world premiere of *The Conquest Requiem* by Gabriela Lena Frank, debuts as Prior Walter in *Angels in America* with New York City Opera, reprises Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* with Ash Lawn Opera and Dancaïre in *Carmen* with Boston Lyric Opera. On the concert stage he joins the New York Festival of Song at the Moab Music Festival and National Sawdust, sings *Messiah* with Boston Baroque and Colorado Bach Ensemble, sings in orchestral performances of Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs*, *Dona Nobis Pacem* and *Hodie*, solos in the Bach B Minor Mass with the Amherst Bach Festival and sings recitals in Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Boston, Fort Worth, Springfield, Boulder and other cities.

The 2015-2016 season was highlighted by his return to Seattle Opera as Harlekin in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. During previous seasons he joined Boston Baroque as Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* where the Boston Globe said "He had the audience in the palm of his hand." He also returned to Boston Lyric Opera in *La Bohème*, Bob Jones University at Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, and made his debut with the Colorado Symphony for performances of *Messiah*. Other highlights include Dandini with Opera Philadelphia and Fort Worth Opera, Mercurio (*La Calisto*) and the title role in *Galileo Galilei* (by Philip Glass) at Cincinnati Opera, and Riolo (Florença in *el Amazonas*) and Schaunard (*La Bohème*) at Seattle Opera.

In past seasons, Garland has portrayed Rossini's Figaro with Dayton Opera, Knoxville Opera and Cincinnati Opera (cover), Schaunard at Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Saratoga, Atlanta Opera, Fort Worth Opera and Dayton Opera; Ping (*Turandot*) at Arizona Opera, Silvio (*I Pagliacci*) with Hawaii Opera Theatre, Don Giovanni at Opera New Jersey, Mozart's Count at Dayton Opera, Guglielmo at Opera Saratoga, Mercurio at Lyric Opera of San Antonio and Annapolis Opera, Giuseppe (*The Gondoliers*) with Utah Opera and Danilo with Sarasota Opera Artist Concert Series.

Other concert performances include Handel's *Messiah* with Boston Baroque, UMS (Ann Arbor, MI), Dartmouth Handel Society (Helmuth Rilling, conductor) the Colorado Bach Ensemble, Arizona Symphony, Virginia Symphony and others; *Carmina Burana*, *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, *Five Mystical Songs*, *Dona Nobis Pacem*, *Hodie*, Faure *Requiem* and Duruflé *Requiem*.

Particularly suited for baroque repertoire, Garland has sung numerous performances with Boston Baroque, The Handel and Haydn Society, and the Colorado Bach Ensemble and sang in Cincinnati Opera's first Baroque production (*La Calisto*). He has also soloed with Emmanuel Music in Boston.

Garland is the winner of the Lavinia Jensen, NATSAA, Washington International, American Traditions, NATS and Opera Columbus Competition and was a prize winner in the Montreal International, Jose Iturbi, Gerda Lissner, McCammon and Palm Beach International Competitions. He was an apprentice at the San Francisco Opera Center and the Seattle Opera and Cincinnati Opera Young Artists programs.

# Tafelmusik

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