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PREVIEW
NOTES

American Quartet w/ Andrés Díaz, cello
Wednesday, October 27 • 8:00 PM • Perelman Theater

Background

Formed in 1974, when its original members were students at the Juilliard School, the American String Quartet was launched by winning both the Coleman Competition and the Naumburg Award in the same year. In three decades of touring since, the American has performed in all 50 states and appeared in virtually every important concert hall throughout the world. They last appeared with PCMS in 2007. Cellist Andrés Díaz was born in Chile in 1964 and won the Naumburg International Cello Competition in 1986. A sought-after recitalist, he performs regularly with the Díaz String Trio, featuring violinist Andrés Cardenes and violist Roberto Díaz.

Program

Quartet in D Major, Op. 76, No. 5

Franz Joseph Haydn

Born: Mar. 31, 1732, in Rohrau, Austria

Died: May 31, 1809, in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1797

Last PCMS performance: New Zealand Quartet in 2005

Duration: 20 minutes

“Largo”—the fifth of the six Op. 76 quartets—is an entirely original work for a composer in his sixties. It boasts a wholly unique opening movement, an eternally hilarious finale, and perhaps the deepest and most personal of all Haydn's slow movements for string quartets.

Quartet in F Major

Maurice Ravel

Born: Mar. 7, 1875 in Ciboure, France

Died: Dec. 28, 1937 in Paris, France

Composed: 1902-03

Last PCMS performance: Juilliard Quartet in 2009

Duration: 28 minutes

Perhaps the most frequently played 20th century string quartet, Ravel's masterpiece is the work of an already mature artist. The opening movement's pianissimo second theme is as hollow and melancholy as the first theme is warm and inviting. In the second movement, Ravel moves into the pizzicato world that Debussy explored in the scherzo movement of his Quartet. In

the slow movement, parts from earlier in the quartet return in new guises. And the finale plunges straight into a frantic 5/4 meter at its start, lightens up in the middle and then ends with a bang.

Quintet in C Major, D. 956

Franz Schubert

Born: January 31, 1797 in Vienna, Austria

Died: November 19, 1828 in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1828

Last PCMS performance: Musicians from Marlboro in 2010

Duration: 55 minutes

This quintet is one of the pinnacles of the chamber music canon and is often cited as a significant example of Schubert's legacy. For his scoring, Schubert went against the model of Mozart and Beethoven, who each added a second viola to the conventional string quartet for their quintets; Boccherini provided the only precedent for using two cellos. Schubert uses the second cello to create dense and varied textures: sometimes the cello serves as a second bass instrument under a full quartet, sometimes it's a bass-rich quartet sans violin, and sometimes there is a rich interplay between instrumental sections.