

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW
NOTES

Dover Quartet

Joseph Conyers, *double bass*

Tuesday, April 4 – 7:30 PM

Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

PROGRAM

Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 20, No. 1

Franz Joseph Haydn

Born: March 31, 1732, Rohrau, Austria

Died: May 31, 1809, Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1772

Duration: 22 minutes

In her guide to the Haydn quartets, Rosemary Hughes memorably described this work as springing from “that central core of tranquility that lies at the heart of Haydn’s music.” The easy interplay in the opening Allegro moderato, with the instruments nonchalantly swapping roles, is a world away from the violin-dominated first movements in the Op. 9 and Op. 17 quartets. This movement, too, is a classic example of Haydn’s inspired thematic economy, with the whole varied narrative evolving from the opening phrases.

Quartet No. 1

George Walker

Born: June 27, 1922, Washington, DC

Died: August 23, 2018, Montclair, NJ

Composed: 1946

Duration: 22 minutes

Pulitzer Prize winning composer George Walker's first string quartet was composed after his graduation from the Curtis Institute of Music and debut as a prodigious piano soloist with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra. The first movement presents strongly contrasting themes in a clearly defined sonata form. The second Adagio movement would later become the basis of Walker's most popular work, Lyric for Strings. The third movement is a large-scaled rondo which closes with a reflective coda.

Quintet in G Major, Op. 77

Antonín Dvořák

Born: September 8, 1841, Nelahozeves, Austria

Died: May 1, 1904, Prague, Czechoslovakia

Composed: 1875

Duration: 40 minutes

Dvořák's String Quintet in G Major was originally planned as a five-movement work for string quartet plus bass, with the order of movements being Allegro con fuoco, Intermezzo, Scherzo, Poco Andante, and Finale. All the movements except the Intermezzo were composed in 1875; the Intermezzo was a re-composed and re-scored version of the slow movement of his unpublished String Quartet in E Minor from 1870. However, in 1883, Dvořák removed the Intermezzo from the quintet, re-composed and re-scored it again, and published it separately as his *Nocturne* for string orchestra. The four-movement version of the quintet was published in 1888 as Dvořák's Op. 77. The quintet itself is an example of Dvořák's first maturity as a composer, that is, the period after he had taught himself how to compose and after he had rejected his youthful enthusiasm for Wagner. The work is cast in classical Viennese forms like Dvořák's models Mozart and Schubert, with the opening movement set in sonata form, the slow movements in ternary form, the Scherzo having a central trio, and the closing movement in rondo form. At this time Dvořák was also enthusiastic about Bohemian music, and as a result each of the movements contain characteristically Bohemian melting melodies, poignant harmonies, and vigorous rhythms. Although, like most of Dvořák's chamber music except his Piano Quintet and his "American" String Quartet, the String Quintet in G Major is generally ignored in the concert hall and on disc, it is as worthy of attention as the string quintets of Brahms.