

**Friends of Chamber Music present the Pavel Haas Quartet in concert
at the Vancouver Playhouse, Sunday, March 16, 2025, at 3:00 pm**

PAVEL HAAS QUARTET

Veronika Jarůšková – violin

Marek Zwiebel – violin

Šimon Truszka – viola

Peter Jarůšek – cello



The Pavel Haas Quartet is revered across the globe for its richness of timbre, infectious passion and intuitive rapport. Performing at the world's most prestigious concert halls and having won five Gramophone Awards and numerous other awards for their recordings, the Quartet is firmly established as one of the world's foremost chamber ensembles.

To celebrate its 20th anniversary, the Quartet was invited to be the featured cover artist of The Strad's June 2022 issue; the Quartet was also BBC Music Magazine's feature interview in the same month. They were included in the latter magazine's earlier list of the 10 greatest string quartets of all time in which they were described as "stylistically powerful and richly sonorous, known for passionate and fearless performances".

The Pavel Haas Quartet has been Artist-in-Residence at the Dvořák Prague Festival since 2022 and for which they curate chamber music concerts. They have programmed all the Dvořák string quartets and other chamber music works for the Festival over the last three seasons.

The Pavel Haas Quartet records exclusively for Supraphon. Their recording of the Brahms piano and viola quintets (Opus 34 and 111, respectively) with pianist Boris Giltburg and their former member, violist Pavel Nikl, was released to critical acclaim, described as "radiant and vivacious" by The Strad, and was Presto Classical's Recording of the Week. Their album of Shostakovich string quartets (Nos. 2, 7, 8) received the Recording of the Year from Classic Prague Awards and was named "one of the 100 best records of the year" by The Times.

The Quartet has received five Gramophone Awards for their recordings of Dvořák, Smetana, Schubert, Janáček, and Haas. Their recording of Dvořák's String Quartets No.12 "American" and No.13 was awarded Gramophone Recording of the Year in 2011. Further accolades include BBC Music Magazine Awards and the Diapason d'Or de l'Année in 2010 for their recording of Prokofiev's String Quartets Nos. 1 & 2.

Since winning the Paolo Borciani competition in Italy in 2005, other early career highlights included the nomination as ECHO Rising Stars in 2007, participation in the BBC New Generation Artists scheme between 2007–2009 and the Special Ensemble Scholarship awarded to them by the Borletti-Buitoni Trust in 2010.

The Quartet is based in Prague and studied with the late Milan Škampa, the legendary violist of the Smetana Quartet. They take their name from the Czech-Jewish composer Pavel Haas (1899–1944) who was imprisoned at the Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1941 and tragically died at the Auschwitz concentration camp three years later. His legacy includes three wonderful string quartets.

The Pavel Haas Quartet is represented by Shirley Kirshbaum Associates.

Programme

String Quartet No. 3, H.183

Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959)

Allegro
Andante
Vivo

Bohuslav Martinů was born in St. Jakub's Church in the small town of Polička, not far from the Moravian border. The sounds of organ, church bells, and the tick-tock of the tower clock were the soundtrack of Martinů's childhood. Displaying an early aptitude for music, he was given a violin and, at age 16, sent to the conservatory in Prague to study. He studied violin and organ before being dismissed for "incorrigible negligence."

Returning to Polička, he devoted himself to the analysis of mostly French music, composed modest works, and began teaching. His first public recognition came after the premiere of a cantata, *Czech Rhapsody*, celebrating the independence of Czechoslovakia in 1918. He joined the violin sections of the Czech Philharmonic and National Theater orchestras and was mentored by the great conductor Václav Talich. In 1923, Martinů moved to Paris to study with composer Albert Roussel.

Blending influences from Eastern European folk music, the neoclassicism of Les Six, impressionism, jazz, and the modernist styles of Stravinsky and Bartók, Martinů developed a highly personal musical language that served him over the next three decades.

Martinů fled Paris for the United States in 1940. After World War II, Martinů taught at the Mannes College of Music and Princeton University. He left the U.S. in 1953, settling in Nice and then Switzerland, where he died in 1959. He was buried in his hometown of Polička.

The acerbic and concise String Quartet No. 3 was composed in 1929. The opening **Allegro** movement features plucked cello and viola playing 'col legno' (with the wood of the bow), supporting elusive figures in the two violins that threaten to break into a jazz riff. Unapologetically dissonant, the four very independent—and very argumentative—musical lines rise and fall together but, it seems, uneasily.

With the hints of jazz resonating in our ears, the second **Andante** movement takes on a bluesy quality, with the viola often given the primary musical line. The **Finale** is a scorcher (marked half note = 132), demanding incredible virtuosity and attentive ensemble playing.

String Quartet No. 2, Opus 26

Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897-1957)

Allegro
Intermezzo - Allegretto con moto
Larghetto - Lento
Waltz (Finale) - Tempo di Waltz

Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897-1957) was most widely known and rewarded as one of the founding composers of Hollywood film music, but he is not as well-known as a composer in the classical music

world. Somehow, only a handful of his compositions have made it to the concert stage, such as his Violin Concerto, Op.35, and his opera, 'Die tote Stadt'. His three string quartets are modern tone poems imbued with beautiful melancholy and Viennese charm. A child prodigy, Korngold wrote some of the most heart-wrenching melodies, which are sure to leave any listener longing for more.

His String Quartet No.2, Op. 26 (1933) was written just before Korngold moved to Hollywood and is full of musical imagery of Vienna, with gestures towards the waltzes of Johan Strauss II as well as the intricate lyricism of Richard Strauss. It is notable for its clarity, rhythmic impetus, and melodic directness.

A fierce anti-serialist, Korngold was determined that it was still possible to stretch the boundaries of tonality without adapting to the 12-tone technique that his colleague Arnold Schoenberg had boldly developed; a choice that would put him into one of two camps in Vienna, and proved to be difficult for his continued success, since it resulted in accusations of 'juvenile triviality'. Korngold's response was, "I always remained true to my own beliefs".

Intermission

String Quartet No. 11 in C Major, Opus 61

Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)

Allegro

Poco adagio e molto cantabile

Scherzo.

Allegro vivo—Trio

Finale. Vivace

Dvořák composed his ambitious String Quartet in C Major, Op. 61, in 1881. Joseph Hellmesberger, the concertmaster of the Vienna Philharmonic and first violinist of the Hellmesberger Quartet, commissioned this music, but dismissed it as a "weak work" and never played it in public. Instead, the premiere was given a year later in Berlin by the Joachim Quartet.

Dvořák considered his Op. 61 to be "the greatest and also most accomplished" of his then existing chamber music works. The filigree textures as well as the echoes of Schubert's Quintet in C Major and Brahms's Sextet in G Major show that he was trying to shed the cliché of a naïve writer of Slavic melodies and place himself in the Viennese tradition.

Dvořák's style in the **Allegro** movement is defined by three themes and the principal rhythmic motive. He begins immediately with the first theme, a lyrical melody of just four bars, played by the first violin. The full rhythmic motive is eventually played by all four instruments, in thematic, accompaniment, and transition settings. The composer further fragments the rhythmic motive by using the triplet as a sub-motive throughout the movement. This constant appearance of a triplet creates a recurring sense of burgeoning energy and propulsion. In the closing section, Dvořák offers a hint of folk music infused into the otherwise stately melodic material. An engaging development section follows the exposition. The music builds, with a gradual crescendo into a brawny section filled with wide leaps and dozens of *fz* (*forzando*) markings, suggesting an image of a heavy ship crashing into large waves on the sea. The recapitulation section repeats the main themes.

The **Poco adagio e molto cantabile** lives up to its description—the music is a bit slow and very songlike. Dvořák again makes use of three thematic groups, using many modified triplets, in which the triplets begin with a rest. This weakens the principal beats and removes much of the rhythmic predictability.

Dvořák sets the **Scherzo** section in A minor and has the viola introduce the principal theme, which is based on the same rhythmic motive that was critical to the first movement. But when this rhythmic

impulse is employed in a scherzo dance-like setting, it is much more light-footed than in the first movement, which is warm, expansive and heavier.

In the **Finale**, Dvořák continues the ebullient energy of the trio, even going a step further with the faster tempo. The best way to listen to this movement is by grasping on to all of the thematic and motivic ideas that have permeated the first three movements, as well as the principal theme of the final movement, and hearing how Dvořák splices bits of all those ideas together. The movement draws to a close with a serene meditation in the first violin, culminating in a quick repeat of the opening theme.

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Next concerts - both at the Vancouver Playhouse at 7:30 pm

Pacifica Quartet

Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at 7:30 pm

Barber: String Quartet in B Minor, Opus 11 (including the famous Adagio)

Bartók: String Quartet No. 4 in C Major, Sz.91

Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 2

Isidore Quartet

Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at 7:30 pm

Mozart: String Quartet No. 19 in C Major, K 465 “Dissonance”

Billy Childs: String Quartet No. 3 “Unrequited”

Beethoven: String Quartet No. 12 in E-flat Major, Opus 127

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2025-2026 Friends of Chamber Music concert season

1. Tue 14 Oct 2025 Aris Quartet (1st FCM concert)
2. Tue 28 Oct 2025 Esme Quartet (2nd FCM concert)
3. Tue 11 Nov 2025 Modigliani Quartet (2nd FCM concert)
4. Sun 01 Feb 2026 Casals Quartet (2nd FCM concert)
5. Sun 15 Feb 2026 Castalian Quartet (1st FCM concert)
6. Tue 24 Feb 2026 Takacs Quartet (28th FCM concert)
7. Sun 15 Mar 2026 Mandelring Quartet (10th FCM concert)
8. Tue 24 Mar 2026 Trio Boheme (1st FCM concert)
9. Tue 31 Mar 2026 Dover Quartet (2nd FCM concert)
10. Tue 28 Apr 2026 Calder Quartet (1st FCM concert)

Please make note of the dates and ensembles. Subscription packages and single tickets for the 2025-2026 season will go on sale after the end of the 2024-2025 concert series.