

**Friends of Chamber Music present the Takács Quartet in concert
at the Vancouver Playhouse, Tuesday, September 22, 2026, at 7:30 pm**

Edward Dusinberre – violin

Harumi Rhodes – violin

Richard O'Neill – viola

Mihai Marica – cello



As the world-renowned Takács Quartet embarks upon the 2026-2027 season, Edward Dusinberre, Harumi Rhodes (violins) and Richard O'Neill (viola) welcome new cellist Mihai Marica. The ensemble is excited about varied projects that include a recording project of works by Gabriela Lena Frank and a tour of César Franck's piano quintet with Jeremy Denk. For Hyperion Records the Takács will release an album of two Mozart viola quintets with violist Timothy Riddout. In August 2026 the ensemble was awarded Chamber Music America's most prestigious honor, the Richard J. Bogomolny National Service Award, honouring those who have made significant and lasting contributions to enrich and foster a greater appreciation for chamber music. The Takács Quartet maintains a busy international touring schedule. As Associate Artists at London's Wigmore Hall, the group will play four concerts that include performances with pianist Steven Osborne and works by Haydn, Schubert, Carlos Simon, Gabriela Lena Frank, Mendelssohn, and Brahms. During the season the ensemble will play at other prestigious European centres including Vienna, Vilnius, Bergen, and Utrecht.

The group's North American engagements include concerts in New York at Carnegie Hall and for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, University of Chicago, Pittsburgh, Santa Monica, Vancouver, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Berkeley, Ann Arbor, Portland, and at the University of Maryland where the quartet continues its position as Visiting Artists. The quartet will become Official Chamber Music Ensemble at the Segerstrom Center.

The members of the Takács are Artists in Residence at the University of Colorado and during the summer months join the faculty at the Music Academy of the West, running an intensive quartet seminar there.

The Takács has recorded for Hyperion since 2005 and all their recordings for this label are available to stream at <https://www.hyperion-streaming.co.uk> In 2021 the Takács won a Presto Music Recording of the Year Award for their release of string quartets by Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn, and a Gramophone Award with pianist Garrick Ohlsson for piano quintets by Amy Beach and Edward Elgar. Other recordings for Hyperion feature music by Haydn, Schubert, Janáček, Smetana, Debussy and Britten, as well as piano quintets by César Franck and Shostakovich (with Marc-André Hamelin), and viola quintets by Brahms and Dvořák (with Lawrence Power). For their CDs on the Decca/London label, the Quartet 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 the group's recordings can be found in the [recordings section](#) of the Quartet's website.

The Takács Quartet is known for its innovative programming. In July 2024 the ensemble gave the premiere of *Kachkaniraqmi* by Gabriela Lena Frank, a concerto for solo quartet and string orchestra. Since 2021-22 the ensemble has partnered regularly with bandoneon virtuoso Julien Labro in a program featuring new works by Clarice Assad and Bryce Dessner, commissioned by Music Accord. In 2014 the Takács performed a program inspired by Philip Roth's novel *Everyman*, with actress Meryl Streep, at Princeton University, and again with her in 2015 at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. They first performed *Everyman* at Carnegie Hall in 2007 with the late actor Philip Seymour Hoffman. They have toured 14 cities with the poet Robert Pinsky, and have played regularly with the Hungarian Folk group Muzsikás.

In 2014 the Takács became the first string quartet to be awarded the Wigmore Hall Medal. In 2012, Gramophone announced that the Takács was the first string quartet to be inducted into its Hall of Fame. The ensemble also won the 2011 Award for Chamber Music and Song, presented by the Royal Philharmonic Society in 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. The group 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, including its first Friends of Chamber Music concert in Vancouver. The final original member of the quartet, cellist András Fejér, retired earlier this year and handed over his place in the group to cellist Mihai Marica.

Members of the Takács Quartet are the grateful beneficiaries of an instrument loan by the Drake Foundation. The Takács Quartet appear by arrangement with Seldy Cramer Artists, Inc.

PROGRAMME

String Quartet No. 6 in F Minor, Opus 80

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

Allegro vivace assai

Allegro assai

Adagio
Finale: Allegro molto

This quartet, Mendelssohn's last completed chamber work, was written in 1847, nine years after Opus 44. On May 17, 1847, Mendelssohn's adored older sister, Fanny, who was 41, died suddenly. To help him recover from his grief, his wife persuaded him to visit Switzerland. There, surrounded by the beautiful countryside, he forced himself to complete the F minor quartet. This is an angry piece in which the composer expresses his grief. He tried to cram all the powerful emotions that usually might require a symphony orchestra to express into this quartet. Sadly, completion of this powerful work preceded his own death, on November 4, 1847, by less than six months.

The agitated opening phrase of the Allegro builds to an aggressive motto that continues through the quartet. As the theme continues, all forward motion ceases as the instruments sustain long held notes. When the motifs of the theme develop, they steadily grow in pitch and volume. The coda opens quietly but quickly reaches a high level of concentrated intensity that lasts to the end of the movement.

Continuing the mood, the second Allegro, which is savage and sardonic, opens with a bizarre dance with hammered syncopation and harsh dissonance. In the short middle section, the cello and first violin play an implacable ostinato line to which the violins add a macabre waltz-like theme after which the opening section returns.

The elegiac Adagio, a most personal movement, grows from the opening phrase which is shared by the cello and first violin. It works up to a dramatic climax that expresses Mendelssohn's despair and anguish. There is a sudden return to the quiet line of the opening. A brief final statement of impressive virtuosity ends with a quiet reminiscence of the first three notes.

The sonata-form Finale has a restless anxiety. Its two themes, a syncopated line and a drooping cadence, are held under a tight reign. However, Mendelssohn's wrath reappears again in the development and final coda.

According to our current records, this work was first performed for Friends in 1983 by the Guarneri Quartet and this is the sixth performance of the full work, although movements from it have been played as encores. We last heard it in 2024 when it was played by the Gropius Quartet.

"Quijotadas"

Lena Gabriela Frank (1972–)

Gabriela Lena Frank, an American pianist and composer, was born in Berkeley, California, United States. Her father is of Lithuanian Jewish heritage and her mother is Peruvian, of Chinese descent. She grew up in Berkeley, California. Frank received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Rice University, and a Doctorate in Music Composition from the University of Michigan in 2001. In fall 2025, Frank's piece, *Leyendas: An Andean Walkabout* (2001), was played for us by the Jasper String Quartet. The composer has been awarded the 2026 Pulitzer Prize for Music.

*“Quijotadas (2007) for string quartet is inspired by *El Ingenioso Hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha* by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616). Widely considered the first modern novel, this tale satirizes post-Conquest Spain by relating the tale of a middle-aged lesser nobleman who undertakes absurd adventures in pursuit of romantic — and seriously outdated — knightly ideals. Cervantes’ brilliant and colorful resulting social commentary still reverberates for us today in the arts and popular culture at large. Quijotadas, which is the Spanish word for extravagant delusions wrought in the Quixotic spirit, is in five movements. They are:*

I. Alborada: Traditionally a Spanish song of welcome or beginnings, this is in the style of music for the chifro, a small high-pitched wooden panpipe played with one hand. It is often employed by a traveling guild worker to announce his services as he walks through the streets of town.

II. Seguidilla: This free interpretation of the spirited dance rhythms of Don Quijote’s homeland of La Mancha also evokes two typical instruments — the six-stringed guitar, and its older cousin, the bandurria, which finds its origins in Renaissance Spain.

III. Moto Perpetuo: La Locura de Quijote: This movement is inspired by an early chapter in the novel that describes Don Quixote sequestering himself in his hacienda, reading nothing but novels of chivalry, the pulp fiction of his time. The teasing promises of grandeur make him dizzy and he eventually goes mad.

IV. Asturianada: La Cueva: The style of this traditional mountain song (whereby a young male singer issues forth calls that rise and fall with great emotion and strength) is used to paint a portrait of the Cave of Montesinos. In an important episode of the novel, Don Quijote fantasizes about the legendary hero Montesinos trapped under enchantment in a highland cave.

V. La Danza de los Arrieros: Throughout the tale, Don Quijote is constantly rubbing up against arrieros (muleteers) who, for Cervantes, are the embodiment of reality in contrast to Don Quijote’s fantasy world. The encounters with these roughnecks are always abrupt and physical, usually resulting in a sound thrashing for Quijote. Each beating brings him closer to reality, and in the end, he must poignantly reconcile himself to the fact that his noble ideals do not find a hospitable home in the contemporary world.”

— notes by composer Gabriela Lena Frank

INTERMISSION

String Quartet No. 14 in D Minor, D810

Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828)

Allegro

Andante con moto

Scherzo: Allegro molto; Trio

Presto

Composed near the end of Schubert’s life, this masterpiece ranks amongst his greatest works. Its sobriquet of “Death and the Maiden” alludes to the piano introduction to his 1817 song with the same name that inspires the second movement. An impromptu reading of the quartet took place

in 1826 while Schubert made last-minute corrections to the score; it remained unpublished until 1831.

The **Allegro** opens with a terse, descending triplet figure with two fortissimo statements; a shuddering, groping first violin pianissimo follows. This triplet rhythm is prevalent throughout the movement; so obsessively reiterated with sharp contrasts of dynamics and mood, it takes on the character of a motto. The coda builds to a stunning climax, followed by a quiet ending echoing with the ever-present triplets.

The **Andante** is a set of five variations on the sombre G-Minor chorale from Schubert's song. The first four variations end in G-Major, and signify the rest and relief from life's woes that Death offers the Maiden. The theme, a single repeated rhythmic figure with minimal melodic or harmonic movement, is a perfect fit. The movement reaches a passionate climax in the final variation, with a prevailing theme of gloom and dejection.

The angular and tightly coiled **Scherzo**, which also reflects the Death theme, opens with slashing syncopation, catapulting the listener back into D-Minor and a world of conflict. The tense atmosphere is relieved only momentarily by a sweet tranquil trio with long melodic lines and a lilting waltz-like underpinning.

The final **Allegro** is a tarantella: a fast and feverish dance rhythm that sets the pulse racing. A breathless opening is followed by a chorale-like, pianissimo second theme. The triplet theme is heard once more as the foundation for a diabolical sassy third theme played by the first violin with the tarantella as accompaniment. The final prestissimo builds headlong to an electrifying conclusion.

Friends first heard this magnificent quartet in 1950 played by the Hungarian Quartet and before hearing it for the 26th time in this concert it was performed most recently in our concert series by the Modigliani Quartet in 2021 during the first concert after the COVID-19 lockdown.

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Next concerts - both at the Vancouver Playhouse, 600 Hamilton Street, Vancouver, BC

Busch Trio (Netherlands)

Tuesday, October 13, 2026 – 7:30 pm

Antonín Dvořák: Piano Trio No. 4 in E Minor, Op. 90 "Dumky Trio"

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: Piano Trio in A Minor, Op. 50

Terra String Quartet (USA)

Tuesday, November 17, 2026 – 7:30 pm

Maddalena Casulana: Madrigals

Benjamin Britten: String Quartet No. 3, Opus 94

Ludwig van Beethoven: String Quartet No. 15 in A Minor, Opus 132

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