

SAVANNAH MUSIC FESTIVAL PRESENT:

# Philip Dukes & Escher String Quartet Program I

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 6 PM  
TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



SAVANNAH  
MUSIC FESTIVAL  
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NOTES ON THE PROGRAM BY  
KEN MELTZER

**FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN  
(1732-1809)**

**String Quartet in B-flat Major, Opus  
76, No. 4, "Sunrise" (1797)**

- I. *Allegro con spirito*
- II. *Adagio*
- III. *Menuetto. Allegro*
- IV. *Finale. Allegro, ma non troppo*

**WOLFGANG AMADEUS  
MOZART (1756-1791)**

**String Quintet No. 4 in G Minor, K.  
516 (1787)**

- I. *Allegro*
- II. *Menuetto. Allegretto*
- III. *Adagio ma non troppo*
- IV. *Adagio; Allegro*

**Philip Dukes, viola**

**Escher String Quartet:**

**Adam Barnett-Hart, violin**

**Brendan Speltz, violin**

**Pierre Lapointe, viola**

**Brook Speltz, cello**

## STRING QUARTET IN B-FLAT MAJOR, OPUS 76, NO. 4, "SUNRISE" (1797)

Franz Joseph Haydn was born in Rohrau, Austria, on March 31, 1732 and died in Vienna, Austria, on May 31, 1809.

*Approximate performance time is 24 minutes. This is an SMF premiere.*

Haydn composed his series of six String Quartets, Opus 76, during the period of 1796-7. Haydn dedicated the Quartets to the Hungarian Count Joseph Erdödy, who commissioned the works. The Haydn "Erdödy" Quartets were published in 1799 by André (Germany), Artaria (Austria), and Longman, Clementi & Co (London).

Haydn composed these works following the second of his pair of triumphant visits to London (1791-2, 1794-5). Haydn traveled to London at the invitation of the German born violinist, composer, and impresario Johann Peter Salomon. Salomon offered Haydn an extremely lucrative contract to supervise a series of London concerts that would feature new works by the esteemed Austrian composer. Haydn gladly accepted, but over the reservations of the composer's much younger friend, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (see, String Quintet, K. 516, below). According to biographer Georg August Griesinger, in December of 1790 Mozart cautioned Haydn: "You won't be able to stand it for long and will soon be back, you're no longer as young as you were." The 58-year-old Haydn replied: "But I'm still sprightly and in good health."

Haydn biographer A.C. Dies reported that Mozart further argued: "Papa! You have had no education for the great world, and you speak too few languages." To this Haydn responded: "Oh! My language is understood all over the world." Again according to Dies, Mozart exclaimed:

"We are probably saying our last adieu in this life." Tears welled in both men's eyes. Haydn was deeply moved, for he applied Mozart's words to himself, and the possibility never occurred to him that the thread of Mozart's life could be cut by the inexorable (Fates) the very next year.

Mozart died on December 5, 1791, at the age of 35.

When Haydn returned from his London visits, he was universally acclaimed as the world's greatest living composer. And the six Erdödy String Quartets are the work of a genius at the height of his powers. After attending performances of these Quartets, English music historian Charles Burney wrote to Haydn:

I had the pleasure of hearing your new quartetti (opera 76) well performed before I went out of town, and never received more pleasure from instrumental music: they are full of invention, fire, good taste, and new effects, and seem the production, not of a sublime genius who had written so much and so well already, but one of highly-cultured talents, who had expended none of his fire before.

I. *Allegro con spirito*—The Quartet's opening sequence inspired the work's

“Sunrise” nickname. The first violin, over the ensemble’s sustained chord, sings a radiant soaring passage. The second theme, introduced by the cello, is a descending take on its predecessor. The exposition concludes with a playful sequence, capped by *fortissimo* exclamation. The brief development of the principal themes is set in the minor. The first violin reprises the opening ascending passage, the start of the recapitulation. Another *fortissimo* sequence provides the movement’s vigorous conclusion.

II. *Adagio*—The Quartet’s slow-tempo movement, in triple meter and the key of E-flat Major, opens with an undulating five-note motif. The first three notes of that motif are present throughout the *Adagio*. The movement is notable for its hushed mode of expression, punctuated by the first violin’s flights above the staff. The three-note motif predominates in the *Adagio*’s *pianissimo* closing measures.

III. *Menuetto. Allegro*—The third movement *Minuet* is based upon a playful series of eighth notes, capped by a pair of quarter notes. In the central *Trio* section, the drone of the viola and cello, suggesting the sound of bagpipes, is the accompaniment to the violins’ melody. The movement concludes with a reprise of the opening *Minuet*.

IV. *Finale. Allegro, ma non troppo*—The *Finale* opens with a spirited melody that may have its origins in an English folksong. A minor key sequence precedes the reprise of the opening melody. In the closing portion, Haydn calls upon the quartet to play the music at a fleeter *Più allegro*, and then, an even faster *Più presto*. The scintillating dash to the finish culminates in the ensemble’s forceful chords.

## STRING QUINTET NO. 4 IN G MINOR, K. 516 (1787)

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria, on January 27, 1756, and died in Vienna, Austria, on December 5, 1791.**

*Approximate performance time is 34 minutes. SMF performance history: March 30, 2017.*

For years, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart attempted to leave his native Salzburg, where he felt his talents were underappreciated. Finally, in the spring of 1781, Mozart terminated his service to the Salzburg Court to pursue a career as a freelance musician in Vienna. Mozart’s Vienna career reached its apex in the mid-1780s. Mozart was in constant demand as a composer, performer, and teacher.

The exhilaration of Mozart’s triumphant early years in Vienna ultimately yielded to profound frustration and unhappiness. Mozart experienced a precipitate decline in the demands for his services in Vienna. In December of 1787, Mozart and his family were forced to vacate their luxurious Vienna apartment, settling into far more humble lodgings in the northwest suburbs.

Mozart was reduced to begging for money from acquaintances, principally Michael Puchberg, a fellow mason and ardent music lover. One of the ways Mozart sought to repay Puchberg was by selling subscriptions to purchase scores of new compositions. On April 2, 5, and 9, 1788 in the *Wiener Zeitung*, Mozart advertised subscriptions to three String Quintets—C Major, K. 515 (completed April 19, 1787), G minor, K. 516 (completed May 16, 1787), and C minor, K. 516b (a 1788 arrangement of Mozart’s 1782 Serenade for Winds, K. 388).

In June, 1788, Mozart wrote to Puchberg:

Your true friendship and brotherly love give me the necessary courage to ask you a big favor;—I still owe you 8 *ducats*—but at present I am not only unable to pay it back, but my trust in you is so great that I dare ask you to help me out with another 100 gulden until next week (when my concerts start at the Casino)—by that time I will definitely have received my subscription money and can easily pay you back the 136 gulden, together

with my warmest thanks.

As it turned out, neither the concerts nor the subscription proceeds materialized. Mozart was forced to extend his subscription offer on the three String Quintets, from June 25, 1788, to January 1, 1789.

In the final two years of his life, Mozart composed two more String Quintets—D Major, K. 593 (1790), and E-flat Major, K. 614 (1791). In time, the Five late String Quintets became recognized as being among Mozart’s crowning achievements in the chamber music repertoire.

It appears that Mozart (as well as a dear friend of his) held these Quintets in high esteem. In his 1829 *Reminiscences*, Mozart’s friend, the Abbé Maximilian Stadler, recalled:

Mozart and Haydn frequently played together with (Stadler) in Mozart’s Quintettos; (Stadler) particularly mentioned the 5th in D Major (K. 593)...the one in C Major (K. 515), and still more that in G minor (K. 516)...1st Viola either Mozart or Haydn in turn.

I. *Allegro*—The first violin, over insistent accompaniment by the second violin and first viola, introduces the descending, chromatic first principal theme. The theme undergoes an extended treatment by the ensemble before resolving to the second principal melody, again played by the first violin. The remainder of the exposition, as well as the ensuing development, seamlessly and tantalizingly alternate between the minor and major. However, the recapitulation of the principal themes, inaugurated by the first violin, remains in the minor, right to the terse conclusion. In that sense, this opening movement bears a clear kinship to its counterpart in another great Mozart G-minor work, the Symphony No. 40, K. 550 (1788).

II. *Menuetto. Allegretto*—While the second-movement *Minuet*, by custom a courtly dance, is in the traditional 3/4 meter, it moves in fits and starts, punctuated by *forte* dissonances. The key shifts from G minor to Major for the contrasting central *Trio* section. A reprise of the opening *Minuet* brings the second movement to a close.

III. *Adagio ma non troppo*—The ensemble is muted throughout for the slow-tempo third movement. The first violin immediately

sings the first of three principal themes, a lovely and noble melody. The agitated second principal melody is again introduced by the first violin, punctuated by a retort from the second viola. The first violin's radiant, descending melody rounds out the trio of themes. A reprise of the three melodies resolves to a *pianissimo* conclusion.

IV. *Adagio; Allegro*—The mutes are set aside for the finale. It opens with an extended slow-tempo introduction (*Adagio*), very much in the character of a tragic operatic *scena*, with the first violin assuming the role of the lead soprano. After a brief pause, the key changes from G minor to Major, as the first violin introduces a sprightly theme in 6/8 time (*Allegro*), the principal rondo melody. From here to the work's conclusion, the tension and gloom of the slow-tempo introduction (and preceding movements) are once and for all swept aside, right to the Quintet's radiant final bars.