



YANG & DOVER PLAY DOHNÁNYI  
THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2020

GERALD R. FORD AMPHITHEATER

CONCERT 7 PM

Amy Yang, piano

*Dover Quartet*

Joel Link, violin

Bryan Lee, violin

Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, viola

Camden Shaw, cello

Kerry McDermott, violin

Clara Neubauer, violin

Oliver Neubauer, violin

Paul Neubauer, viola

HAYDN

String Quartet in D minor, Op. 76, No. 2, "Quinten" (20 minutes)

Allegro

Andante o più tosto allegretto

Menuetto: Allegro ma non troppo

Vivace assai

BACEWICZ Quartet (1949)

Allegretto – Allegro giocoso – Poco meno – poco meno – Tempo II

Andante tranquillo

Molto allegro

DOHNÁNYI

Quintet No. 1 for Two Violins, Viola, Cello and Piano in C minor, Op. 1 (30 minutes)

Allegro

Scherzo: Allegro vivace

Adagio, quasi andante

Finale: Allegro animato

String Quartet in D minor, Op. 76, No. 2, "Quinten" (1796-1797)  
Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Haydn was universally acknowledged as the greatest living composer upon his return to Vienna in 1795 from his second London venture; he was 63. Though his international renown had been founded in large part upon the success of his symphonies and keyboard sonatas, he repeatedly refused offers to compose further in those genres, and instead concentrated the creative energies of his later years on the string quartet and the vocal forms of Mass and oratorio. Except for the majestic Trumpet Concerto, his only instrumental compositions after 1795 were the six quartets of Op. 76, the two of Op. 77 and the unfinished torso of Op. 103 — they were the culmination of nearly four decades of experience composing in the chamber medium. "The eight quartets which he completed show no signs of flagging powers," wrote Rosemary Hughes in her study of Haydn's chamber music. "In that last great wave of energy which carried them to completion, he gathers up all the efforts and conquests, all the explorations, all the personal idiosyncrasies too, of nearly half a century of unbroken creative life.... And behind this and permeating it all is a quality hard to define, but one in which we can sense the weight of a lifetime's experience, human and musical. No young mind and heart could have conceived this music, could have so tempered exuberance with gentleness, or touched sober steadfastness with vision."

The six Op. 76 Quartets were written on commission from Count Joseph Erdödy, scion of the Viennese family who had encouraged Haydn's work since at least 1776 and whose members became important patrons of Beethoven after his arrival in the capital in 1792. The Quartets were apparently ordered and begun by the end of 1796, because Haydn was able to play them at the piano for the Swedish diplomat Frederik Samuel Silverstolpe the following June. They were probably given their formal premiere on September 28, 1797, when they were played for the visit of Archduke Joseph, Viceroy of Hungary, to Eisenstadt, family seat of Haydn's employer, Prince Nicholas Esterházy II. The Quartets were issued in Vienna by Artaria in 1799 ("Nothing which our house has ever published equals this edition," trumpeted the advertisement in the *Wiener Zeitung* on July 17th), and appeared shortly thereafter in London. "[I have] never received more pleasure from instrumental music," wrote Charles Burney, the preeminent English music scholar of his day. "They are full of invention, fire, good taste and new effects, and seem the production, not of a sublime genius who has written so much and so well already, but of one of highly cultivated talents, who had expended none of his fire before." Critical opinion has not wavered since.

The Quartet, Op. 76, No. 2, the only work in the set in a minor key, opens with the falling-interval, long-note motive that gives the composition its nickname — "Quinten" ("*Fifths*"). This germinal fragment courses inexorably throughout the movement in an amazing variety of transformations, interwoven with more animated material for which it serves as an emotional and textural foil. The mood brightens for the formal second theme area, but the development section is imbued with the proto-Romantic pathos with which the Quartet began. The recapitulation and coda maintain the music's stormy demeanor to the end of the movement. The *Andante* is an ornate instrumental song divided into three large structural paragraphs: A (major) — B (minor) — A (major). The haunted third movement, sometimes referred to as the "Witches' Minuet," is constructed from a barren canon in which paired voices chase each other in precise imitation at the interval of an octave; the central trio provides contrast with its more cheerful key and soaring violin line. The finale is a bustling rondo based on a fiery theme inspired by the

Gypsy music that Haydn heard from the locals in the courtyard of the Esterházy Palace in western Hungary.

Quintet No. 1 for Piano, Two Violins, Viola and Cello in C minor, Op. 1 (1895)  
Ernst von Dohnányi (1877-1960)

Ernst von Dohnányi was among the 20th-century's foremost composers, pianists, teachers and music administrators. Born on July 27, 1877 in Pozsony, Hungary (now Bratislava, Slovakia), he inherited his musical interests from his father, a talented amateur cellist, who gave him his first lessons in piano and theory. At seventeen, he entered the newly established Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest, the first Hungarian of significant talent to do so. The young composer was honored with the Hungarian Millennium Prize for his Symphony No. 1 in 1895, and two years later he received the Bösendorfer Prize for his First Piano Concerto. He graduated from the Academy in 1897, and toured extensively for the next several years, appearing throughout Europe, Russia, the United States, and South America. From 1905 to 1915, Dohnányi taught at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik, a position he assumed at the invitation of his friend, the eminent violinist Joseph Joachim. He returned to Budapest in 1915, becoming director of the Academy in 1919 and musical director of Hungarian Radio in 1931. He served as conductor of the Budapest Philharmonic for the 25 years after 1919 while continuing to concertize at home and abroad and remaining active as a composer. In addition to his work as a performer and composer, Dohnányi's contributions to the musical life of his homeland included inspiring and performing the works of younger composers (notably Bartók and Kodály), reforming the Budapest Academy's music curriculum, guiding the development of such talented pupils as Georg Solti, Géza Anda and Annie Fischer, expanding the repertory of the nation's performing groups, and serving as a model in musical matters through the strength of his personality and the quality of his musicianship.

In 1944, Dohnányi left Hungary, a victim of the raging political and militaristic tides that swept the country during World War II. He moved first to Austria, then to Argentina, and finally settled in Tallahassee in 1949 as pianist and composer-in-residence at Florida State University, where his students included Pulitzer Prize-winner American composer Ellen Taaffe Zwilich and his grandson, conductor Christoph von Dohnányi, former Music Director of the Cleveland Orchestra. Though Dohnányi was in his seventies, his abilities remained unimpaired, and he continued an active musical life. He appeared regularly on campus and in guest engagements; his last public performance was as conductor of the FSU Symphony just three weeks before his death. He died in New York on February 9, 1960 during a recording session.

Dohnányi composed the Piano Quintet No. 1 in 1895, when he was eighteen and still a student at the Franz Liszt Academy; after having written nearly seventy pieces during his teenage years, he deemed it the first of his compositions worthy of an opus number. The work's premiere in Budapest that same year drew the attention of Brahms, who sponsored the performance of the Quintet in Vienna that helped to establish Dohnányi's international reputation as a composer. The opening movement, passionate, spacious and almost symphonic in scale and sonority, takes as its main theme a bold, striding melody announced by the piano. An arching phrase in the cello provides the transition to the movement's formal second theme, a sweetly lyrical strain given by the

strings. The development treats all three themes and reaches its climax just as the recapitulation begins. After the thematic materials are returned in expressively heightened settings, a majestic reworking of the principal subject brings the movement to a confident close. The *Scherzo*, with its fiery cross-rhythms and headlong energy, is reminiscent of the Bohemian *furiant*; a gently swaying central trio provides formal and expressive balance. The elegiac *Adagio* follows a broad three-part form (A–B–A), with a poignant theme first sung by the viola heard in the outer sections and a more passionate strain occupying the center of the movement. The finale summarizes the remarkable state of Dohnányi's craft and creative gifts at the outset of his career: a Classical rondo form whose reiterations of a folk-influenced, mixed-meter theme are separated by episodes of Schubertian lyricism, Bach-inspired fugue and even a recall of the first movement's principal theme to round out the Quintet's structure, all concluded by a coda of Beethovenian triumph.

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