

# Takács Quartet

**Friday**  
**Nov 17**  
**7:30 p.m.**  
**Main Stage**

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**Edward Dusing**

Violin

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**Harumi Rhodes**

Violin

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**Richard O'Neill**

Viola

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**András Fejér**

Cello

This program will run 120 minutes,  
including one intermission.

*Classical Series Sponsor:*  
*Colburn Foundation*

*This performance is part of the*  
*California Festival.*



Photo Credit: Amanda Tipton

# Takács Quartet

# Program

## String Quartet No. 63 in B-flat Major, Op. 76, No.4, “Sunrise” Hob.III:78

Joseph HAYDN  
(1732-1809)

- I. Allegro con spirito
- II. Adagio
- III. Menuetto
- IV. Finale

## Flow

Nokuthula NGWENYAMA  
(b. 1976)

- I. Prelude
- II. Adagio
- III. Quark Scherzo
- IV. Finale

## INTERMISSION

## String Quartet No. 8 in E minor, Op. 59, No. 2, “Razumovsky”

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN  
(1770-1827)

- I. Allegro
- II. Molto adagio
- III. Allegretto
- IV. Finale

“Flow” is co-commissioned by BroadStage (Santa Monica, CA), Cal Performances (Berkeley, CA), Friends of Chamber Music (Portland, OR), Shriver Hall Concert Series (Baltimore, MD), Boston Celebrity Series, 92nd Street Y (New York, NY) Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Capital Region Classical (Schenectady, NY), University Musical Society, (Ann Arbor, Michigan)

The Takács Quartet appears by arrangement with Seldy Cramer Artists, and records for Hyperion and Decca/London Records.

The Takács Quartet is Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Colorado in Boulder and are Associate Artists at Wigmore Hall, London

[www.takacsquartet.com](http://www.takacsquartet.com)

## FLOW

Nokuthula Endo Ngwenyama

This is an abridged version of Nokuthula Ngwenyama’s “Flow” Program note. Her complete program note, including video, audio, illustrations and a bibliography, is available at [broadstage.org/tickets-shows/calendar/takacs-quartet/](http://broadstage.org/tickets-shows/calendar/takacs-quartet/)

Come in and out of silence  
Tone swirling in the balance.  
Nothing, then everything  
Waving into space.

Then light.  
And after a longer while  
Air.  
And now sixteen strings manually animated  
Vibrating through time.

When Harumi Rhodes of the celebrated Takács Quartet asked me about writing a piece for the group I was surprised, greatly honored and fearful. The string quartet is considered a “perfect” ensemble. It inspires delicacy, sensitivity and adventure. The core range is

# About the Artists

smaller than that of the piano, yet its timbre allows for beautiful interplay. Harumi asked that the quartet be about anything in the natural world, an idea requested by lead commissioner Cal Performances. Fortunately, patterns in music and science pair well, so that brought relief.

I researched a wide array of subjects for over a year. Topics included the life cycle, carbon reclamation, environmental protection, animal communication, starling murmurations, our last universal common ancestor (LUCA), black hole collisions and the sub-atomic realm. I listened to the recordings of the Takács Quartet with gusto. Systems layered upon other systems revealed a common flow to existence tying us to the initial outburst of energy and matter at the birth of our universe.

“Flow” starts like gas seeping from an infinitely full balloon about to pop. Then, as matter inflates space, climactic material is presented almost immediately before abruptly burning out for the universal dark ages. The Prelude examines “B’ing/BE’ing” melodically and harmonically through moments of pranayama (the transformative power of breath). It ends with a trailing Om.

The Lento brings further cooling and space in chorale around an octave B-centric pedal. Prelude motifs are given room to develop.

Quark Scherzo explores our fundamentally playful selves vibrating here, there – and where? Our sub-atomic realm giddily waltzes up and down while we embrace the ideas of solidity and ego. The opening cello mimics quark motion. The trio, whose only claim to three are triplets in the cello line, provides no break for anyone and instead intones a ballade. The movement ends in virtuosic flurry.

The Finale settles into a stylized recitative where three lower strings solo before coming together to feature a soaring treble voice. Flowing triplets turn into a Classical Indian Dadra Tal (even six beat) rhythm in the bass line while upper strings bow their bouts simulating Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) radiation. Upper strings join in via pizzicato glissandi. There is a return to the Prelude opening, then a slingshot into the ecstatic joy of starling murmurations. Lower strings continue unrelenting while violin lines blissfully chase one another, turning, merging and enjoying. They eventually land, the sky calms through long D overtone glissando, and a retreating tremolo reveals: Enjoy and go with the

Flow, we only know what we know.

Heartfelt thanks to Harumi Rhodes and the entire Takács Quartet for asking a Divinity School graduate to write this. Thanks also to all of the commissioners: Cal Performances; University Musical Society; Shriver Hall Concerts; 92nd Street Y New York; Philadelphia Chamber Music Society; Friends of Chamber Music, Portland, Oregon; BroadStage; Boston Celebrity Series; and Capital Region Classical (Schenectady, NY). Thanks also to musicians Dewa Putu Berata (director of Cudamani), I Wayan Arya Misha and Dewa Ogen for the opportunity to share and learn about different layers of instrumentation in Balinese Gamelan.

-Nokuthula Endo Ngwenyama

## Takács Quartet

The world-renowned **Takács Quartet** is now entering its forty-ninth season.

Edward Dusingber, Harumi Rhodes (violins), Richard O’Neill (viola) and András Fejér (cello) are excited about the 2023-2024 season that features varied projects including a new work written for them. Nokuthula Ngwenyama composed ‘Flow,’ an exploration and celebration of the natural world. The work was commissioned by nine concert presenters throughout the USA. July sees the release of a new recording of works by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and Dvořák for Hyperion Records, while later in the season the quartet will release works by Schubert including his final quartet in G major. In the Spring of 2024 the ensemble will perform and record piano quintets by Price and Dvořák with long-time chamber music partner Marc-Andre Hamelin.

As Associate Artists at London’s Wigmore Hall the Takács will perform four concerts featuring works by Hough, Price, Janacek, Schubert and Beethoven. During the season the ensemble will play at other prestigious European venues including Berlin, Geneva, Linz, Innsbruck, Cambridge and St. Andrews. The Takács will appear at the Adams Chamber Music Festival in New Zealand. The group’s North American engagements include concerts in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington DC, Vancouver, Ann Arbor, Phoenix, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Portland, Cleveland, Santa Fe and Stanford. The ensemble will perform two Bartók cycles at San Jose State University and Middlebury College and appear for the first time at the

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Virginia Arts Festival with pianist Olga Kern.

The members of the Takács Quartet are Christoffersen Fellows and Artists in Residence at the University of Colorado, Boulder. For the 23-24 season the quartet enter into a partnership with El Sistema Colorado, working closely with its chamber music education program in Denver. During the summer months the Takács join the faculty at the Music Academy of the West, running an intensive quartet seminar.

In 2021 the Takács won a Presto Music Recording of the Year Award for their recordings of string quartets by Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn, and a Gramophone Award with pianist Garrick Ohlsson for piano quintets by Amy Beach and Elgar. Other releases for Hyperion feature works 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 Dvorák (with Lawrence Power). For their CDs on the Decca/London label, the Quartet has 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 recordings can be found in the Recordings section of the Quartet's website.

The Takács Quartet is known for its innovative programming. In 2021-22 the ensemble partnered with bandoneon virtuoso Julien Labro to premiere 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 Meryl Streep at Princeton, and again with her at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto in 2015. They first performed *Everyman* at Carnegie Hall in 2007 with Philip Seymour Hoffman. They have toured 14 cities with the poet Robert Pinsky, and 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. Members of the Takács Quartet are the grateful beneficiaries of an instrument loan by the Drake Foundation. We are grateful to be Thomastik-Infeld Artists.

## **Nokuthula Ngwenyama**

"Mother of Peace" and "Lion" in Zulu, **Nokuthula Ngwenyama** (No-goo-TOO-lah En-gwen-YAH-ma) has garnered recognition as an orchestral soloist, recitalist, chamber musician and composer. Also known as 'Thula' (TOO-lah), her performances provide "solidly shaped music of bold mesmerizing character" (Gramophone). Her music has been performed by the Detroit Symphony, London Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, New Jersey Symphony, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Toronto Symphony, KwaZulu Natal Philharmonic and the Orquesta Nacional de Madrid, amongst others. Her chamber works have been performed in North America, Africa and Asia.

'Thula' gained international prominence winning the Primrose International Viola Competition at age 16. The following year she won the Young Concert Artists International Auditions, which led to debuts at the Kennedy Center and the 92nd Street 'Y'. As a recipient of the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant she has performed as soloist and in recital around the world.

This 23-24 season the renowned Takács Quartet premieres Ms. Ngwenyama's quartet 'Flow.' Lead by Cal Performances (Berkeley, CA) and co-commissioned by the University Musical Society (Ann Arbor, MI), Shriver Hall Concerts (Baltimore, MD), 92nd Street 'Y' (New York, NY), Philadelphia Chamber Music Society (PA), Friends of Chamber Music (Portland, OR), BroadStage (Santa Monica, CA), Boston Celebrity Series (MA), and Capital Region Classical (Schenectady, NY), it celebrates the flow of natural history from our universe's initial creative event to now.

As curator of Composer's Choice, a co-production

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of Phoenix Chamber Music Society, ASU/Kerr Cultural Center (Scottsdale, AZ) and Peace Mama Productions, 'Thula' presents 'Cars Talk' for violin, viola, cello and double bass with Ruggero Alliffranchini, Thomas Landschoot and Nicholas Villalobos and her concerto for viola and orchestra with piano reduction performed with pianist Eckart Sellheim.

Nokuthula Ngwenyama collaborates with instrumentalist-composers Valerie Coleman (flute) and Han Lash (harp) in their trio Umama Womama. She also joins Jaime Laredo, Bella Hristova, Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, Sharon Robinson and Keith 'Robby' Robinson with her work 'Sexagesimal Celebration' opening Schoenberg and Dvorak sextets on the Linton Chamber Series (Cincinnati, OH).

Born in Los Angeles, CA of Zimbabwean-Japanese parentage, Nokuthula Endo Ngwenyama attended the Crossroads School for Arts and Sciences and the Colburn School for the Performing Arts (now the Colburn Community School of Performing Arts) before graduating from the Curtis Institute of Music. As a Fulbright scholar she studied at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris and received a Master of Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School. A voting member of the Recording Academy, Ms. Ngwenyama is the first composer in residence with the Phoenix Chamber Music Society. She resides with her family in Arizona on Tohono O'odham land.

## About the California Festival

The California Festival is a two-week, statewide festival of new music from around the world, showcasing today's most compelling and forward-looking voices in performances of works written within the past five years.

The California Festival will take place November 3-19, 2023 and brings together organizations and ensembles from throughout the state of California including symphony orchestras, chamber music groups, jazz ensembles, choirs, and more, all performing new music. Learn more at [cafestival.org](http://cafestival.org)