

SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE

Graduate String
QUARTET

DEC. 4, 7:30 P.M.
ORGAN RECITAL HALL



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE STRING QUARTET

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2023 | ORGAN RECITAL HALL, 7:30 PM

Quartet in C Minor, Op. 110

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Largo-Allegro molto-Allegretto-Largo-Largo

INTERMISSION

Quintet in A Major, K.581

W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Allegro

Larghetto

Menuetto-Trio I, Trio II

Allegretto con variazioni

Jessica Rosado, violin
Cesar Reyes, violin
Ethan Buell, viola
Frederic Schmid, cello
Alfredo Ramirez, clarinet

String Quartet No. 8 in C minor, Op.110.

Dmitri Shostakovich

The String Quartet No. 8 in C minor, Op.110, was written in just three days, from July 12th to 14th, 1960. Shostakovich was in the city of Dresden, Germany, to compose music for a documentary film about the ravages of bombing that occurred in Dresden. When he arrived, he was very overwhelmed to see the devastation of the buildings and broken structures, even 15 years after the event.

The dedication appears as “Dedicated to the victims of fascism and war.” He had a very intimate relationship with this work; in his own words he says: “I was thinking that if I must die one day, it is unlikely that someone will write a work in my memory, so I decided to write one myself. On the cover, it could simply be written: Dedicated to the memory of the composer of this quartet.” There is no correct answer about the meaning of this quartet. Whatever it may be, it has deep and introspective extra-musical messages.

The quartet consists of 5 movements:

In the first, we hear the Leitmotif (a recurring phrase or figure associated with an idea, person, or situation) composed with the abbreviation of his name “D-S-C-H”, which becomes D-E flat-C-B in German nomenclature. With the reference of Tchaikovsky’s 6th Symphony that Shostakovich himself mentions, this movement has a pessimistic, elegiac character. This character is immediately broken by the following Allegro molto belonging to the second movement, which can be described as frantic and intense. During this, several versions of the “D-S-C-H” theme emerge.

He also uses the Piano Trio No. 2 theme, written during the Second World War and dedicated to his dear friend, Ivan Sollertinsky who had passed during the writing. Shostakovich called this theme “Jewish,” saying: “Jewish folk music has made a very powerful impression on me... it can seem joyful as well as tragic. It is almost always laughter through tears. This quality... is close to my ideas of what music should be. There should always be two layers to music. The Jews were tormented for so long that they learned to hide their despair. They express despair in dance music.”

The third movement has a sarcastic and slightly creepy character, where the “D-S-C-H” appears repeatedly from the violin’s voice and later introduces the main theme of the First Cello Concerto, composed the previous year.

The fourth movement gives way to the interruption. The knock-knock-knock rhythm is possibly a metaphor for the terror in Shostakovich's life. It has been suggested that the tapping may also represent gunshots, and the hum of the first violin represents distant planes.

The fifth movement marks the end of the quartet, and it is here that a special musical moment occurs. After the fight, a luminous cello solo appears, which refers to Act 4 of Lady Macbeth (who visits her captive lover in Siberia) When there seems to be hope and light, the "D-S-C-H" theme appears on the violin, taking us back to the elegy, fading away, leaving nothingness.

— program notes by Jessica Rosado Azcuaga

Clarinet Quintet in A **W.A. Mozart**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in January 1756 in Salzburg, Austria. At age three he learned to play the piano due to his father's musicianship, and at age six he started composing. In his 35 years of life, he wrote over 600 pieces; some of his writings include sonatas, concertos, symphonies, and operas. Rich people would pay him to write them a piece of music, or he would just get inspired to write.

Mozart Clarinet Quintet was completed on September 29, 1789, in Vienna, two years before he passed away on December 5, 1791. It premiered on December 22. Mozart wrote the Clarinet Quintet K.581 and the Clarinet Concerto K.622 for Anton Stadler.

The autograph scores of both the Clarinet Quintet and the Clarinet Concerto were stolen from Stadler, but people believe he had them pawned. The Clarinet Quintet was published in 1802 by André in Offenbach and by Artaria in Vienna. The new edition was written for A clarinet because scholars believe the development of the basset horn was not complete till 1790.

The quintet is in four movements and written for A clarinet, two violins, a viola, and a cello. Mozart believed the clarinet was an instrument that could closely mimic a vocal singer. Mozart's vocal style of writing incorporates wide leaps that no singer could ever produce, exploring the clarinet as both a soprano and baritone voice. The Clarinet concerto was written in 1791 and has many of the same melodic ideas as the quintet. The beginning of the first and second movements of the quintet sounds like the concerto. Each of the movements in the Clarinet Quintet demonstrates the extended beautiful qualities of the clarinet.

— program notes by Alfredo Ramirez

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