

Perfection in four parts

Legendary Takács Quartet tours for Musica Viva

10-28 August 2017



*'This is chamber music
playing of overwhelming
intensity...simply the best I
have ever heard in
concert.'*

The Guardian

The **Takács Quartet** comes close to musical perfection. Touring nationally for **Musica Viva** from **10 – 28 August 2017**, the world-renowned group embodies the magic telepathy of the string quartet like few others. This unmissable tour sheds new light on classics by **Haydn**, **Beethoven** and **Dvořák**, as well as a **world premiere** by Musica Viva's Artistic Director, **Carl Vine AO**.

"The Quartet has toured with us a record-breaking eight times, making it reasonable to claim this as the most loved group in Musica Viva history," says Vine. Indeed, the Takács Quartet is one of the best-loved string ensembles worldwide. It was founded in 1975 by four Hungarian musicians, two of whom – second violinist **Károly Schranz** and cellist **András Fejér** – are still very much in place. With American violist **Geraldine Walther** joining 12 years ago and British leader **Edward Dusinberre** approaching his 24th anniversary in the post, its reputation remains world class.

The players' lives are so entwined that they are beneficiaries of each other's life insurance. And as well as performing 80 concerts a year worldwide, they are all sought-after teachers at the University of Colorado in Boulder. But tensions are few: "Károly and András have been playing together for 42 years and they're still talking..." laughs Dusinberre.

The Takács Quartet have received every major British and American accolade for their recordings (and many from elsewhere), earning a place in the **Gramophone Hall of Fame**. More unusually for a musical group, they have been individually and collectively recognised with significant Hungarian national honours: the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary.

The group is touring two programs (listed overleaf) featuring music by **Haydn**, **Dvořák**, **Beethoven** and a **world premiere from Carl Vine**. "Carl wrote his fourth quartet for us about 13 years ago and we loved it," says Dusinberre. They are looking forward to premiering the Sixth. "His music is melodic, lyrical and dramatic, with good contrast and a strong relationship between the movements."

Entitled *Child's Play*, the piece was commissioned with the support of recently retired Musica Viva Chairman Michael Katz and his wife Frédérique Katz, The Seattle Commissioning Club, who are long-time friends of the Quartet, and Carnegie Hall, where the group is a frequent visitor.

The composer says of the work: "Michael and Frédérique wanted to commission music that uplifted, edified and elated. The playfulness of children is a perfect example of the unbridled exuberance natural to our physiology, and a sense of fun and limitless potential is innately available to us all." Fittingly, the Quartet will carry it further afield after the Australian premiere, with a future performance already scheduled at **Carnegie Hall**.

MEDIA RELEASE



Haydn is central to the Takács's repertoire, and the Hungarian qualities of the music, often with whirling, energetic finales, well suit their style. "It's good to be working on Haydn because it reminds you always of the conversational element in the group and how to fine-tune the witticism of the exchanges," says Dusinberre. "There's also that earthy side to the music that you can really get your teeth into. You can sometimes be a bit rude with Haydn, which is rarely the case with Mozart."

Op 127 is the first of Beethoven's late quartets, a major preoccupation for Dusinberre himself. In 2016, he published *Beethoven for a Later Age: The Journey of a String Quartet*, entwining the stories behind these masterpieces with the life of the Takács Quartet itself. It was an '**Economist Book of the Year**' in 2016 and recently earned him the Royal Philharmonic Society's 'RPS Award for Creative Communication'.

"I was amused to come across stories of what an unsuccessful first performance op 127 had," he remarks. "Notably, how the first violinist fell flat on his face and was fired, either by Beethoven or the other members of the quartet!"

Dvořák's 14th quartet makes entirely different demands: "When it gets dramatic there's so much going on and we worked hard to create clarity out of that. Oddly enough, Dvořák wrote the slow movement at Christmas: "I don't know if his family would have been wondering why he had to write music even on Christmas Day, or if it might have been a relief to pack him off and let him get on with it!"

Teaching activities add grist to everyone's mill: "We do masterclasses in Australia and all the students are good," Dusinberre enthuses. "We recruited one of our graduate quartets from there: the **Orava Quartet**, who came to Boulder to study with us a few years ago, then went back to Australia and are doing very well." This tour sees the Quartet mentor students at **masterclasses in Brisbane, Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne**. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

Dusinberre is very much looking forward to their return visit. "The halls are generally full and there are usually quite a lot of kids there," he says. "The audiences are up for an adventure." And so, as always, the Takács Quartet's tour promises to be a highlight of the musical year. To toast their good health in Hungarian, say "*Egészségedre!*"

The Takács Quartet will tour to Perth, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Sydney, Canberra and Newcastle. For bookings and further details, please visit <https://musicaviva.com.au/takacs>. For masterclasses in Brisbane, Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne, please see <https://musicaviva.com.au/masterclass-takacs-quartet/>.¹

TOUR DATES

Perth **10 Aug 2017 7:30 PM**
Melbourne **12 Aug 2017 7:00 PM**
Brisbane **15 Aug 2017 7:00 PM**
Adelaide **17 Aug 2017 7:30 PM**
Sydney **19 Aug 2017 2:00 PM**
Melbourne **22 Aug 2017 7:00 PM**
Canberra **24 Aug 2017 7:00 PM**
Newcastle **26 Aug 2017 7:30 PM**
Sydney **28 Aug 2017 7:00 PM**

VENUES

Adelaide: **Adelaide Town Hall**
Brisbane: **Queensland Conservatorium**
Canberra: **Llewellyn Hall**
Melbourne: **Melbourne Recital Centre**
Newcastle: **Newcastle Conservatorium Of Music**
Perth: **Perth Concert Hall**
Sydney: **City Recital Hall**

MASTERCLASSES

¹Musica Viva's Masterclass program is supported by principal patrons Stephen Johns & Michele Bender, the Sydney Conservatorium Association (NSW), Lyn Hamill & Ian Dover (Queensland), Wesfarmers Arts (Western Australia), and Mary Turner OAM (Newcastle). **Adelaide** masterclass presented in partnership with Elder Conservatorium, University of Adelaide, **Brisbane** masterclass presented with Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, **Melbourne** masterclass presented in partnership with ANAM, **Sydney** masterclass presented with support from City of Sydney.

PROGRAM ONE

(Canberra, Perth, Melbourne Weekend, Newcastle, Sydney Weekday)
HAYDN String Quartet in F major, op 77 no 2
VINE String Quartet no 6 'Child's Play' (2017) (World Premiere)*
BEETHOVEN String Quartet no 12, op 127

PROGRAM TWO

(Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne Weekday, Sydney Weekend)
HAYDN String Quartet in D Major, op 76 no 5 'Largo'
VINE String Quartet no 6 'Child's Play' (2017) (World Premiere)*
DVOŘÁK String Quartet no 14, op 105

*This work was commissioned for Musica Viva Australia with support from Michael and Frédérique Katz, the Seattle Commissioning Club, and Carnegie Hall.

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