

13  
july

FRIDAY

8 PM

Barry Shiffman, *artistic director*  
Osvaldo Golijov, *composer-in-residence*

## DOVER QUARTET

Joel Link, *violin* | Bryan Lee, *violin*

Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, *viola* | Camden Shaw, *cello*

WITH

## BARRY SHIFFMAN, *viola*

Pre-concert talk, 7 PM

GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY JERRY AND MARGARETTA HAUSMAN

STRING QUARTET NO. 3, OP. 46 (1943)

**Viktor Ullmann (1898-1944)**

Allegro moderato—Presto—Tempo I—Largo—(Rondo-Finale)  
Allegro vivace e ritmico

*Dover Quartet*

STRING QUINTET IN G MINOR, K. 516 (1787)

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)**

Allegro  
Menuetto: Allegretto  
Adagio ma non troppo  
Adagio—Allegro

*Dover Quartet, Barry Shiffman*

:: INTERMISSION ::

STRING QUARTET NO. 14 IN A-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 105, B.193 (1895)

**Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)**

Adagio ma non troppo—Allegro appassionato  
Molto vivace  
Lento e molto cantabile  
Allegro non tanto

*Dover Quartet*

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**STRING QUARTET NO. 3, OP. 46**

Viktor Ullmann (b. Teschen, Austria [now Český Těšín, Czech Republic], January 1, 1898; d. Auschwitz, October 18, 1944)

*Composed 1943; 15 minutes*

The catalog of the Czech composer Viktor Ullmann's known compositions makes for a melancholy read: more than two-thirds are marked "lost." His Third String Quartet is the only surviving original chamber work. Ullmann himself is one of the "lost" generation of Czech composers after Janáček, sent in September 1942 by the Nazi regime to Terezín (Theresienstadt), the small garrison town set up as a transit camp for Central European Jews whose ultimate destination was Auschwitz. The composer spent two years in Terezín, during the period the camp was cynically shown off to the rest of the world as a self-governing "model" ghetto, where cultural activities were actively encouraged. Through the harrowing ordeal of living under the cloud of death, where 50,000 were confined in conditions intended for 6,000, Ullmann still managed to create three piano sonatas, a provocative and wonderfully powerful, allegorical chamber opera (*The Emperor of Atlantis*), several orchestral works, his Third String Quartet and many short choral and



Viktor Ullmann drawn in Terezín by the artist and poet Petr Kien

*"It should be emphasized that my musical work was stimulated by Theresienstadt, not stunted. By no means did we sit weeping on the banks of the waters of Babylon. Our endeavor with respect to arts was commensurate with our will to live."*

vocal works, performed at the frequent concerts at the camp. Through the severest form of adversity—"where everything of an artistic nature is the very antithesis of one's environment," as Ullmann observed—he created beauty by eliminating everyday thoughts. "My musical work was stimulated by Theresienstadt, not stunted," this remarkable musician wrote.

Ullmann's Third Quartet, written in Terezín and dated 1943, unfolds as a single-movement structure in which the traditional four movements are clearly embedded. Many of its themes are interrelated. Its musical language results from the challenge that Ullmann's earlier studies in Vienna with Schoenberg had left him to confront—how to reconcile atonal and Romantic harmony and still keep it structurally functioning. The first theme, nostalgic, gently rocking, almost waltz-like, reveals an attractive, post-Romantic solution, not unlike the one arrived at by Alban Berg. Then the second theme is more anxious and restless, less tonally stable. As in a classical quartet, this opening section, the exposition, is repeated. A cello recitative leads into a Presto Scherzo and Trio section, with harsh, aggressive outbursts, extremes of dynamics, ironical dialogue between pairs of instruments, and sinister, stretched chords. Another short recitative, from the



*Brundibár in Terezín. When Czech composer Hans Krása found himself sadly reunited in the Terezín concentration camp with most of the children from the Jewish orphanage in Prague who had first performed his children's opera Brundibár, he reconstructed the opera from memory. Fifty-five performances were then given in Terezín, including a propaganda-driven performance for representatives of the Red Cross.*

two lower instruments, leads to development of the opening nostalgic waltz, now melancholy and despairing. A short fugal slow movement (Largo) follows, built on a dark, twelve-tone theme and working in echoes of the second theme of the opening section, now tortured and sobbing. As it unravels with one last gasp, the Rondo-Finale explodes with a grotesque distortion of the opening theme, rigidly rhythmic now, chilling as all four instruments bend the theme into fugal fragments. Just when it seems no more injury can be done to the waltz, it blazes forth in a glorious fortissimo moment of defiance, its confidence rising to a triple forte passionate conclusion.

## STRING QUINTET IN G MINOR, K. 516

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (b. Salzburg, Austria, January 27, 1756;  
d. Vienna, Austria, December 5, 1791)

*Composed 1787; 34 minutes*

The greatest and most poignant of the mature string quintets, K. 516 was written at a difficult time in Mozart's life. His success with the Viennese public had peaked with the great piano concertos of the early 1780s. Now, in May 1787, Mozart found himself out of favor with those wealthy enough to support the arts and with only a modest salary from his job as chamber composer to the Austrian court. "I never lie down at night without reflecting that— young, as I am—I may not live to see another day," he wrote to his dying father at this time. "Yet none of my acquaintances could say that, in company I am morose or disgruntled."

Music provided Mozart with an outlet for the darkest of his thoughts and the great G-minor Quintet is the darkest of his five late string quintets. The first movement is unremittingly despairing and, exceptionally, remains in the minor key from beginning to end. Its first theme is made up of understated, often fragmented sighs and gasps, which are urgent and emotional in tone. The key of G minor had special meaning for Mozart and, when listening to K. 516, the poignancy of the late G minor Symphony, K. 550 often comes to mind. There's no letup in the emotional intensity when the second theme appears. Still in the minor key, it has a pleading, yearning character and the wide leaps of a minor ninth add an especially anguished edge to the discourse.

The minor-key minuet, with its off-beat stabs of pain and winding, darkly chromatic theme, invites little dancing. Its trio, in the major key, offers some consolation. It is a brief glimpse of light, however, before the slow movement, with its muted strings, which internalizes the music even more. The mood is now poised on a knife edge, the main theme fragmented. Some relief comes with two subsequent themes, but the music continues to hover precariously close to the precipice. Mozart seems reluctant to journey further down this path and the introduction to the finale keeps us anxiously poised. The first violin sustains a heart-rending melody, while the other strings sob and protest. Suddenly the music turns a corner and all is bright and light. The cumulative tension is lifted and, in a display of brilliance, the Quintet turns its back on some of the darkest pages to come from Mozart's pen.



*Dvořák in 1895, at the time of his return from the United States*

## STRING QUARTET NO. 14, IN A-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 105, B.193

Antonín Dvořák (b. Nelahozeves, Bohemia, September 8, 1841; d. Prague, May 1, 1904)

*Composed 1895; 33 minutes*

Chamber music was an important part of Dvořák's composition, totaling more than thirty works. His Op. 1 was a string quintet, with two violas. His first string quartet followed in 1862 when he was 21. His last quartet, his fourteenth and the work to be heard tonight, was written thirty-three years later. Although the majority of his early quartets remained unpublished until long after his death, they gave him a secure grounding in the medium. As a skilled viola player, Dvořák had an insider's understanding of the potential of the string quartet. Indeed, he was one of the few late 19th-century composers to write truly idiomatic quartets that don't endeavor to burst the seams of the medium. Two of his finest quartets, his last two, including Op. 105, were composed in less than two months. But the ease and pleasure with which he created them came after a difficult period.

Behind him was a second visit to the United States. Artistically, it had been a success and he could look back with pride at the new Cello Concerto. But Dvořák had felt cut off from his friends and relatives. He had been isolated from the Bohemian countryside and from a life that provided inspiration for his creativity. He returned to Bohemia in late April 1895. Once back in familiar surroundings, he fell back into the old routine that he had missed. He started the day with an early morning stroll in the Karlsplatz Park and resumed teaching at the Prague Conservatory. He checked up on the comings and goings of the railway trains he loved to watch. He had regular evening meetings with younger musicians and actors in Mahulík's restaurant. For the next six months, however, the ink ran dry. Then the creative block began to disappear. Before long, Dvořák was able to write: "I work so easily and everything goes ahead so well that I could not wish it better." His two late string quartets can be viewed as a summing up of all that he found good in the world. They are an affirmation of life and nature and reveal total mastery of the medium.

Dvořák had sketched the opening of the first movement of the A-flat Quartet, Op. 105, in his last week in New York, but then laid it aside. After an initial hint of foreboding, the mood is generally positive and full of well-being, though the dark clouds hovering over the opening do not altogether disappear. The scherzo is a *furiant*, a Bohemian folk dance, exuberantly propelled, with a trio section full of lilting, soaring melodies. The melodies draw from Dvořák's nationalist musical language, but somehow transcend time and place in one of the composer's most satisfying chamber music movements. Then comes a heartfelt slow movement, musing dreamily on a folksong-like melody. Its ending introduces a note of unease into an otherwise untroubled musical discourse. The finale starts cautiously and appears at first reluctant to abandon itself to unbridled joy. But Dvořák's happiness at being home seems to win through. The music is rich in musical ideas, sometimes nostalgic, more often upbeat and, ultimately, unambiguous in expression.

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## DOVER QUARTET

Since winning the 2013 Banff International String Quartet Competition, the Dover Quartet has become one of the most in-demand ensembles in the world. Additionally, in 2013, the Quartet became the first ever Quartet-in-Residence for the venerated Curtis Institute of Music. Each season, the Dover Quartet performs more than 100 concerts throughout the United States, Canada, South America and Europe, as well as collaborating in concerts with the pianists André Watts, Anne-Marie McDermott and Jon Kimura Parker; the violists Roberto Díaz and Cynthia Phelps; and the Pacifica Quartet. The Dover won not only the Grand Prize, but also all three special prizes at the 2013 Banff International String Quartet Competition, as well as top prizes at the Fischhoff Competition and the Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition. They have participated in multiple festivals, including La Jolla SummerFest, Bravo! Vail and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. In 2013-14, the Quartet acted as the Ernst Stiefel String Quartet-in-Residence at the Caramoor Festival. The Dover Quartet draws from the musical lineage of the Cleveland, Vermeer and Guarneri quartets, having studied at the Curtis Institute and Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, where they were in residence from 2011 to 2013.

## BARRY SHIFFMAN, *viola*



Artistic Director of the Rockport Chamber Music Festival, violinist and violist Barry Shiffman is also Associate Dean and Director of Chamber Music at the Glenn Gould School and Dean of the Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy for Young Artists at The

Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. A co-founder of the St. Lawrence String Quartet (SLSQ), he appeared in more than 2,000 concerts around the globe, and recorded several critically acclaimed discs under an exclusive contract with EMI Classics during his seventeen years with the SLSQ. While in SLSQ, Mr. Shiffman served as artist-in-residence at Stanford University and as visiting artist at the University of Toronto. He has also served in numerous roles at the Banff Centre, including Director of Music Programs, Artistic Director of the Centre's Summer Music Programs, and Executive Director of the Banff International String Quartet Competition, which he continues to direct. Recipient of the Longy School's Nadia Boulanger Prize for Excellence in the Art of Teaching, he received his formal studies at the Royal Conservatory in Toronto, University of Toronto, Utrecht Conservatory, Hartt School of Music, Juilliard School and Yale University.

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**DOVER QUARTET**

SATURDAY, JULY 14 :: 10 AM

