Dover String Quartet
Joel Link, violin | Bryan Lee, violin
Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, viola | Camden Shaw, cello
Barry Shiffman, viola

**QUARTET IN C MAJOR, K. 465 (DISSONANCE) (1785)**
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
- Adagio. Allegro
- Andante cantabile
- Menuetto. Allegro
- Allegro

**QUARTET IN F MAJOR (1902-3)**
Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)
- Allegro moderato - très doux
- Assez vif - très rythmé
- Très lent
- Vif et agité

:: INTERMISSION ::

**STRING QUINTET IN E-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 97, B. 180 (AMERICAN) (1893)**
Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)
- Allegro non tanto
- Allegro vivo
- Larghetto
- Finale: Allegro giusto

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The quartets are, indeed, the fruit of a long and laborious endeavor,” Mozart admits to Haydn in a letter dated September 1, 1785, in which he encloses six new quartets. And the many crossings-out, careful corrections and fragments of quartet movements from this period of Mozart’s life bear this out. Nowhere else did he labor so painstakingly over his music. “Please, then, receive them kindly and be to them as a father, a guide, a friend,” Mozart (a generation younger than Haydn) continues. “I entreat you to be indulgent to those faults that may have escaped a father’s partial eye, and, in spite of them, to continue your generous friendship towards one who so highly appreciates it.”

The magnificent and disturbing C major Quartet is the crowning point of Mozart’s six ‘Haydn’ quartets. The work is true evidence of Mozart’s triumph in emulating Haydn in his Op. 33 collection of quartets from 1782, and achieving a balance of structure, musical style and emotion. Mozart began work on the six quartets not long after moving from Salzburg to Vienna. It was then that he began to hear music by Bach and Handel on a regular basis at weekly gatherings in the Vienna home of Baron van Swieten. The power of the contrapuntal writing began to have a deep and increasing effect on Mozart’s own part-writing at the time. The effect is at its most acute in the unsettling dissonances of the opening 22 measures of the C major Quartet. They give the work a nickname (Dissonance) and arise from a synthesis of free counterpoint and chromatic, ‘highly spiced’ harmonies to use a term that was often thrown at the mature Mozart. The dissonances are carefully calculated to shock – so much so that people at first accused Mozart of releasing the printed music without having carefully proofed the parts! Even half a century later, Belgian music theorist Félix proposed a ‘fix’ to Mozart’s strident harmonies by moving the first violin entry one beat earlier. Many applauded the idea; few went along with it. Today, were the opening to be played with this crass insensitivity to Mozart’s boldness, it’s certain that the stone statue of the Don Giovanni Commendatore would appear to sort things out. The suspense and tension created by the dissonance is released in the ensuing Allegro. The profound, achingly Andante cantabile is one of the most sublime movements Mozart wrote. Throughout the chromatic minuet and serene finale, the musical invention and disciplined working-out of short motifs are exemplary.

**QUARTET IN C MAJOR, K. 465 (DISSONANCE)**

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

*Composed 1785, 31 minutes*

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**STRING QUINTET IN E-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 97, B. 180 (AMERICAN)**

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

*Composed 1893, 35 minutes*
Then, in Spillville, he had been to a show given by the Kickapoos. “In this work I think there will be found the American color with which I have endeavored to infuse it,” Dvořák told the Tribune. “I study certain melodies until I become thoroughly imbued with their characteristics and am enabled to make a musical picture in keeping with and partaking of those characteristics.”

Still, the pentatonic scale is also found in Bohemian music. So, what can be interpreted as Dvořák’s curiosity for the new country and his willingness to be a part of the search for an American identity in music could equally be explained as nostalgia for the old country. Meanwhile, it forms the starting point for an exhilarating, richly scored movement which ranges widely over the emotional spectrum. The rhythmically dynamic second movement raises the temperature even more. Its contrasting middle section gives a beautifully yearning, soaring melody first to viola, then to violin. The slow movement begins with a melody that Dvořák wrote in New York for what he hoped would become a new national anthem, setting the words “My country, ’tis of thee.” Structurally, the movement is a theme and five variations. The finale alternates a bouncy, good-natured theme with more inward-looking episodes in a thoroughly satisfying way.

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DOVER STRING QUARTET
Joel Link, violin | Bryan Lee, violin
Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, viola
Camden Shaw, cello

The Dover Quartet catapulted to international stardom following a stunning sweep of the 2013 Banff Competition. Currently the Penelope P. Watkins Ensemble-in-Residence at Curtis Institute, the Quartet holds residencies with the Kennedy Center and the Bienen School of Music at Northwestern, among others. Their most recent recording, released in 2021, is Volume 2 of The Complete Beethoven Quartets: The Middle Quartets, out on Cedille Records. In 2016, the Dover Quartet was recognized with the Hunt Family Award, one of the inaugural Lincoln Center Emerging Artist Awards and the Avery Fisher Grant, as well as having taken top prizes at the Fischoff and Wigmore Hall International String Quartet competitions. The Quartet members studied at the Curtis Institute and Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music. It was at Curtis that the Quartet first formed, and its name pays tribute to Dover Beach by fellow Curtis alumnus Samuel Barber. The group has since returned for residencies to Rice and to Curtis. The Dover Quartet is dedicated to sharing its music with under served communities and is actively involved with Music for Food, an initiative enabling musicians to raise resources and awareness in the fight against hunger.

BARRY SHIFFMAN, viola

Artistic director of the Rockport Chamber Music Festival and classical music at Rockport Music, internationally acclaimed violist and violist Barry Shiffman is well-respected as a musician, educator and administrator. He was co-founder of the St. Lawrence String Quartet (SLSQ), and currently serves as both the 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. During his 17 years with the SLSQ, he appeared in over 2,000 concerts around the globe, and recorded several critically acclaimed discs. He has served in numerous roles at the Banff Centre and currently serves as Executive Director of the Banff International String Quartet Competition.