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CHAMBER MUSIC
FESTIVAL

Presents



The Dover Quartet

with Cellist Christopher Rex

Premiere, January 31, 2021

Virtual Concert

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The Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival is nationally recognized as one of the foremost music events of its kind. The Festival is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.





PROGRAM

THE DOVER QUARTET

Joel Link, violin

Bryan Lee, violin

Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, viola

Camden Shaw, cello

Christopher Rex, cello

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

DMITRI SHOSTAKOWICH
(1906 - 1975)

Largo

Allegro molto

Allegretto

Largo

Largo

String Quintet in C major, D.956

FRANZ SCHUBERT
(1797 - 1828)

Allegro ma non troppo

Adagio

Scherzo. Presto

Allegretto

Dover Quartet is represented by
The Curtis Institute of Music - 1726 Locust Street - Philadelphia, PA 19103
Recordings: Cedille Records, Azica Records
www.doverquartet

The Dover Quartet

Hailed as “the next Guarneri Quartet” by the Chicago Tribune, the acclaimed Dover Quartet is one of the most in-demand ensembles in the world. Our Quartet-in-Residence for the third year, the Dover performed its inaugural concert as the first-ever Quartet-in-Residence of the Kennedy Center in October 2018. The ensemble will perform over 100 concerts during the current season.

The Dover became the Curtis Institute’s first Quartet-in-Residence in 2013-14. The ensemble was appointed the first-ever Resident Ensemble of the Peoples’ Symphony Concerts in 2015, New York’s oldest concert series. Named Cleveland Quartet Award winner for the 2016-17 and 2017-

18 seasons, the Dover was awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant in March 2017.



The Dover’s members—violinists Joel Link and Bryan Lee, violist Milena Pajaro-Van de Stadt, and cellist Camden Shaw—studied at the Curtis Institute of Music and Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music, where they were mentored by Shmuel Ashkenasi, James Dunham, Norman Fischer, Kenneth

Goldsmith, Joseph Silverstein, as well as former Guarneri Quartet members Arnold Steinhardt, Michael Tree and Peter Wiley. The Dover was formed while its members attended Curtis, and its name pays tribute to *Dover Beach* by fellow Curtis alumnus Samuel Barber.

Christopher Rex



Mr. Rex, general and artistic director of the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival, was principal cellist of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for 39 years before retiring in 2018. He has served in this capacity since 1979, the same year he became the first cellist ever to win the string prize in the Young Artists Competition of the national Federation of Music Clubs. Since then he has appeared as recitalist and chamber musician across the nation. Prior to joining the Atlanta Symphony, Mr. Rex was a member of the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy for seven seasons.

 PROGRAM NOTES

Dmitri Shostakovich

Quartet No. 8 in C minor, Op. 110

By 1960 the ‘Thaw’ following Stalin’s death had improved the outward circumstances of Shostakovich’s life, and he was honored at home and allowed to travel abroad to perform and receive additional honors. The price was a requirement that he perform many duties for the official music establishment. In April 1960, at the personal invitation of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, Shostakovich was elected head of the Russian Composers’ Union. He was also pressured to join the Communist Party, a step he had avoided during all his earlier years of torment. He did this without telling his family and friends, and when it became public the intense shame of his capitulation led to a nervous breakdown in June 1960. “I’ve been a whore, I am and always will be a whore,” he told his old friend Isaak Glikman with tears streaming down his face.

After his recovery, Shostakovich traveled to Dresden in July on assignment to write the score for a film about the fire bombing of that city during World War II. Instead, still filled with anguish and self-pity, he composed his scathing Quartet No. 8 in the short space of three days. He wrote to a close friend, “However much I tried to draft [the film score], I just couldn’t do it.... I reflected that if I die some day, it is hardly likely anyone will write a work dedicated to my memory. So I decided to write one myself.” Another close friend later said the despondent composer meant the Eighth Quartet to be his final work. Ever mindful of the authorities, when Shostakovich returned from Dresden he publicly dedicated the quartet “to the victims of war and fascism”

The Eighth Quartet is written in five movements played without pause. The quartet is unified by the composer’s musical signature, the up-and-down pattern of the notes D E-flat C B, spelling DSCH for Dmitri SChostakowitsch in German musical notation. Shostakovich keeps himself present throughout the entire quartet by weaving this four-note theme into the musical fabric of each movement and also by including many quotations from his earlier compositions. The first movement opens with the DSCH theme played first in the cello and then repeated by all the instruments in turn. Other musical statements are heard, some borrowed from his First and Fifth Symphonies, but the DSCH theme dominates the subdued first movement. The frenzied second movement based on variants of the DSCH theme proceeds to an impassioned quotation of the Jewish-sounding melody from his Second Piano Trio. In the third movement the DSCH theme is transformed into an ironic, grotesque waltz. Quotations from other works of the composer appear, including the opening bars of his Cello Concerto as the movement ends.

A loud three-note rhythm opens the fourth-movement Largo, described by some commentators as a fateful knocking. A sad revolutionary song, “Tormented by Harsh Captivity,” is quoted extensively, and the character of the music changes magically as a love song from the composer’s opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* is played in the high register by the cello. The fifth movement, another Largo, returns to the DSCH theme in the form of an extended fugue, with a counter-subject again quoting *Lady Macbeth*. A dying ending (“morendo”) completes the composer’s musical memorial.

~ note by Robert Strong

Franz Schubert

String Quintet in C Major, D. 956

Schubert composed his C Major String Quintet in August and September 1828 shortly before his untimely death in November. He wrote to Leipzig music publisher H. A. Probst, “Among other things I’ve composed three sonatas for piano solo... and finally I’ve completed a Quintet for 2 violins, viola, and 2 cellos. I have played the sonatas in several places to much applause; the Quintet, however, will be tried out only in the next few days.” From Schubert’s offered list of chamber music masterpieces composed in the years before his death, Herr Probst selected only the E-flat Major Piano Trio, D. 929, for publication. Probst had written to Schubert earlier that “the public does not yet sufficiently...understand the peculiar, often ingenious, but perhaps now and then somewhat curious procedures of your mind’s creations”. The C Major Quintet was not publicly performed until 1850.

Despite little success with publishers and gradually failing health, Schubert was at the height of his creative powers during the last three years of his life, composing much of the music on which his reputation rests: String Quartets D. 810 (Death and the Maiden) and D. 887; Piano Trios D. 898 and 929; the “Great” C major symphony; the song cycles Winterreise and Schwanengesang and many other vocal works, including *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen*; Mass No. 6, D. 950; six piano sonatas; and the C Major String Quintet, D. 956.

Schubert’s addition of a second cello to the Quintet was “somewhat curious” given the precedent of a second viola in the string quintets of both Beethoven and Mozart. However, Schubert’s choice gave him greater tonal depth and richness

that enabled him to combine beautiful melodic lines with moments of astonishing power.

A simple C Major chord opens the Quintet quietly in the four upper voices, as if from the distance. The chord swells and dissolves immediately into dissonance. After returning to C major and a bright melody in the first violin, the four lower voices repeat the entire opening passage in a minor key, casting a poignant shadow across the music. Thus in the first few moments, Schubert expresses the ambiguous blend of joy and sadness that runs through the entire Quintet.

The first movement unfolds in sonata form with the music’s color and character moving restlessly back and forth between major and minor keys. Combining the instruments in pairs, trios, and quartets, the music sings, whispers, growls, and dances as the movement’s main themes are developed. The Adagio begins with an ethereal chorale in the three middle voices seemingly suspended in time between cello pizzicato and muted cries in the violin. A strongly contrasting middle section, convulsive and syncopated, is followed by an ornamented return to the painful beauty of the opening. The Scherzo is a festive contrast to the Adagio, but the mood of the Trio becomes somber as the tempo slows and harmony changes dramatically. The Finale opens with a rollicking dance tempo promising good spirits despite its minor key, but like the first movement the mood of the music slips back and forth in a constant alternation between light and shadow. There is no triumph in the final C chord as it moves an unsettling half step to D-flat before falling back to C.

~ note by Robert Strong



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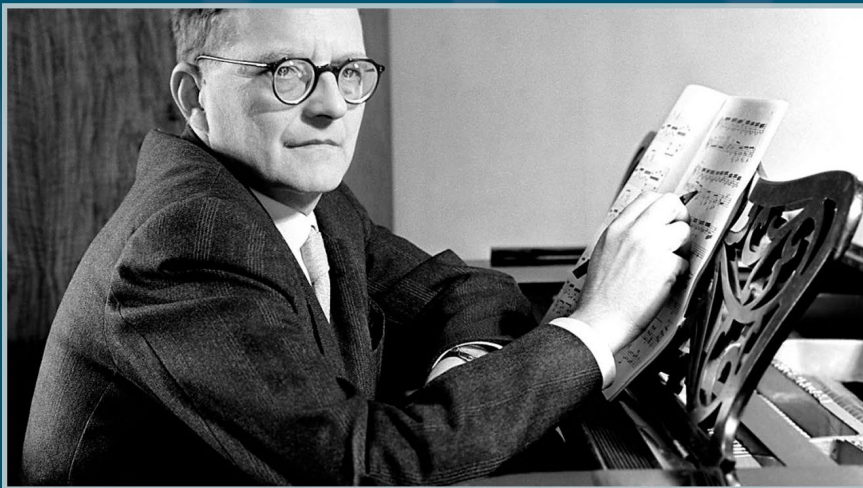
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Dmitri Shostakovich



Franz Schubert