String Quartet No. 20 in D major, K. 499, “Hoffmeister”
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
Allegretto
Menuetto: Allegretto
Adagio
Allegro

String Quartet No. 7 in F sharp minor, Op. 108
Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)
Allegro
Lento
Allegro - Allegretto

**INTERMISSION**

String Quartet No. 9 in C major, Op. 59, No. 3 “Razumovsky”
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Introduzione (Andante con moto) – Allegro vivace
Andante con moto quasi Allegretto
Menuetto (Grazioso)
Allegro molto
In between the six quartets dedicated to Haydn (Nos. 13-19) and Mozart’s final works in the genre, the three “Prussian” quartets (Nos. 21-23), there stands an isolated quartet bearing the subtitle “Hoffmeister,” composed in August of 1876 (a year and a half after the last of the “Haydn” quartets).

In 1785, Franz Anton Hoffmeister (1754-1812) established a music-publishing shop in Vienna, supplying the city’s musical amateurs with a constant flow of chamber music that they loved to play at home - music by such composers as Albrechtsberger, Beethoven, Clementi, Haydn, Pleyel and Vanhal. Hoffmeister eventually moved to Leipzig, where he established another firm that eventually became C.F. Peters, one of the leading music publishers in the world today. Hoffmeister was also a flutist and a highly prolific composer of music for his instrument (25 concertos, 46 quartets, 12 quintets and much else). The Mozart-Hoffmeister connection goes further: Mozart played with Hoffmeister, though he published only (K. 478 and G minor and K. 493 in E-flat major) the first two great piano quartets ever composed (Nos. 13-19) and Mozart’s final works in the genre, 5, 2014 3 dedicated to Nina Vazar. The shortest of Shostakovich’s fifteen string quartets, the Seventh is written without pause between movements. Its brevity and the reappearance in the last movement of musical motifs from the first and second movements suggest a view of the entire quartet as a single movement in sonata form, with the first movement Allegretto as primary theme; the
second movement Lento as contrasting theme; and the last movement as development of the themes followed by recapitulation. This movement is supported by the gradually increasing presence of Shostakovich’s personal four-note “DSCH” pattern across the three movements as a unifying element. (The up-down pattern of the notes D-E-flat C B spell DSCH for Dmitri SCHostakowitsch in German musical notation.)

Two themes alternate in the first-movement Allegretto, a short, twisting three-note gallop and a contrasting rhythmic line in the cello. Unusually for Shostakovich, both themes are harmonically resolved when they reappear later in the movement. The grieving second-movement Lento is unsettled by a restless, weaving accompaniment and a stately descending line which underpins the motion of the movement. As the first movement began in mid air, so to speak, do too this Adagio start on a theme of uncertainty (the “dominant” region of the home key). And as in the introduction to the first movement, here too it is the cello’s moving bass line which underpins the motion of the movement. The third movement begins with a look back to old forms – an easy-going Minuet-Trio instead of the Scherzo which Beethoven himself had previously championed in its place. To underscore his intent he writes Grazioso into the score and produces a delicate Minuet embellished with a flowing obbligato and contrapuntal, beautifully intertwined lines shared by all four voices. But he ends in a distinctly modern vein with an extended bridge which serves as the introduction to the Allegro molto, a final movement of tremendous vigor and momentum cast as a fugue in sonata form. This is one of Beethoven’s most famous and memorable quartet movements, a virtual perpetual motion with the fugue theme served up at top speed while a jolly counter theme later joins the fray starting in the bass line then appearing at one time or another in all the voices, a constant motoric presence holding everything together. This movement demonstrates the power, inevitability and completeness that is a Beethoven trademark.

---Program note by Nora Avins Klein

BIOGRAPHY

The Dover Quartet catapulted to international stardom following a stunning sweep of the 2013 Banff International String Quartet Competition, becoming one of the most in-demand ensembles in the world. The New Yorker recently dubbed them “the young American string quartet of the moment,” and The Straff raved that the Quartet is “already pulling away from their peers with their exceptional interpretive maturity, tonal refinement and taut ensemble.” In 2013-14, the Quartet became the first ever Quartet-in-Residence for the venerated Curtis Institute of Music. During the 2014-15 season, the Dover Quartet will perform more than 100 concerts throughout the United States, Canada, South America, and Europe. Highlights include concerts for the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C, Schneider Concerts in New York City, and Wigmore Hall in London. The Quartet will also perform together with the pianists Anne-Marie McDermott, and Jon Kimura Parker; the violists Roberto Diaz and Cynthia Phelps; and the Pacifica Quartet. In addition, the Quartet will participate in week-long residencies for Chamber Music Northwest, the Phoenix Chamber Music Festival, and the Chamber Music Society of Logan. The Quartet has been reengaged a remarkable number of times for return appearances throughout the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Great Britain.

The Dover Quartet won not only the Grand Prize but all three Special Prizes at the 2013 Banff International String Quartet Competition. The Quartet also won top prizes at the Fischoff Competition and the Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition, and has taken part in festivals such as Chamber Music Northwest, Artsosphere, La Jolla SummerFest, Bravol Vail, and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. During the 2013-14 season, the Quartet acted as the Ernst Stiefel String Quartet-in-Residence at the Caramoor Festival. Additionally, members of the Quartet have appeared as soloists with some of the world’s finest orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Tokyo Philharmonic.

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 2011-2013. The Quartet has been mentored extensively by Shmuel Ashkenasi, James Dunham, Norman Fischer, Kenneth Goldsmith, Joseph Silverstein, Arnold Steinhardt, Michael Tree, and Peter Wiley, and is dedicated to sharing their music with underserved communities and is an active member of Music for Food, an initiative to help musicians fight hunger in their home communities.
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