

SUNDAY

**FEB  
25**

2:00 PM

Harold J. Miossi CPAC,  
Cuesta College

# CHAMBER CONCERT

MOZART / SHOSTAKOVICH / DOHNÁNYI

## ARTISTS



**Anna Polonsky**  
piano



**Scott Yoo**  
violin



**Steven Copes**  
violin



**Caitlin Lynch**  
viola



**Bion Tsang**  
cello

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### 1:00 PM PRE-CONCERT LECTURE

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with Dr. Alyson McLamore

#### WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Piano Trio in G major, K. 564 (1788)

*Allegro*  
*Larghetto*  
*Allegretto*

Ms. Polonsky, Mr. Copes, Mr. Tsang

#### DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

String Quartet No. 10 in A-flat major, op. 118 (1964)

*Andante*  
*Allegretto furioso*  
*Adagio—*  
*Allegretto*

Mr. Copes, Mr. Yoo, Ms. Lynch, Mr. Tsang

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### INTERMISSION

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#### ERNŐ DOHNÁNYI

Piano Quintet No. 2 in E-flat minor, op. 26 (1914)

*Allegro non troppo*  
*Intermezzo: Allegretto*  
*Moderato*

Ms. Polonsky, Mr. Yoo, Mr. Copes, Ms. Lynch, Mr. Tsang

## PROGRAM NOTES

### WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Piano Trio in G major, K. 564 (1788)



Amateurs get a bad rap nowadays: the word often refers dismissively to a person who is unskilled or even inept in some way. True, it can describe someone who does something as a pastime rather than professionally, but in general, we have forgotten what the word indicated in Mozart's era: eighteenth-century "amateurs" were people particularly devoted to something, especially music; the term was

derived from the Latin verb "amare," meaning "to love." For that reason, when scholars tell us that Mozart's last piano trio, K. 564, was probably written for amateurs, we sometimes mistakenly think that it will be of lesser quality. Instead, it was written to be *playable* by the increasing numbers of people who had—thanks to the Industrial Revolution—greater amounts of leisure time (and disposable income), and who were eager to spend their money on pieces they could perform at home for their own pleasure.

The Piano Trio in G fit the bill perfectly for these customers. All three players—the pianist, the violinist, and the cellist—have moments to shine, but they also interweave in interesting ways throughout the composition. Mozart's peers would have recognized his mimicry of a musette—a little French bagpipe—at the start of the "Allegro" movement (when the strings play sustained "drone-like" notes), and they might have been familiar with the plaintive little aria from Mozart's Singspiel *Bastien und Bastienne* that he used as the "theme" for the slow movement's six variations. The finale presents a recurring bouncy, sing-song melody interspersed with contrasting episodes: some lavish, some ominous, but all offering the musicians a delightful collaboration.

### DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–1975)

String Quartet No. 10 in A-flat major, op. 118 (1964)



Through much of the twentieth century, Soviet composers wore artistic shackles. The government-mandated doctrine of "Socialist Realism" demanded that music must convey optimistic themes that ended triumphantly or heroically. It should be accessible to all listeners, and it must avoid "formalism," the censors' term for any Modernist techniques that smacked of Western influence.

The Socialist Realism policy had been adopted in 1934 under Stalin, and even after his death in 1953, the mandate lived on. Still, strict enforcement eased somewhat, and by the time Dmitri Shostakovich wrote his tenth string quartet in the summer of 1964, he made some choices that might have led to his arrest in the past. For one thing, he dedicated the quartet to Mieczysław Weinberg, a prolific Jewish composer who had fled the Nazis as they invaded his native Poland and had resettled in Moscow. This dedication was a risky decision in light of the fact that Shostakovich had just seen his thirteenth symphony blocked by Soviet censors only two years earlier, due to its inclusion of text that was sympathetic to Jewish survivors of the Babi Yar massacres. However, when the quartet premiered in November 1964,

the Soviet government was preoccupied by the power transition following Khrushchev's "voluntary" retirement in mid-October.

The music itself had daring qualities, counterbalanced by shrewd choices that kept it within governmental parameters. For one thing, when Shostakovich uses unusual, dissonant harmonies, he sustains an unstoppable rhythmic drive that keeps listeners' toes tapping. Similarly, the finale's dance-like aspects mask much of its sardonic nature, allowing Shostakovich to hide his secret "formalism" in plain sight.

### ERNŐ DOHNÁNYI (1877–1960)

Piano Quintet No. 2 in E-flat minor, op. 26 (1914)



It seems remarkable that a composer who died in New York in 1960 (during a recording session) could have had the public premiere of his first published work sponsored by Johannes Brahms (who died in 1897). Yet, this was the case for Hungarian-born Ernő Dohnányi, who had been only seventeen when his composition teacher showed the score for Dohnányi's Opus 1—the first piano quintet—to

Brahms. After arranging to hear a private reading of the work, Brahms told Dohnányi, "I could not have written it better myself"—and Brahms put the wheels in motion for a Vienna performance in 1895, with Dohnányi himself at the piano.

Despite this auspicious compositional premiere, it was actually Dohnányi's keyboard skill that launched his professional career after his graduation from the Budapest Academy in 1897. Within three years, he was widely regarded as the greatest Hungarian pianist after Liszt, yet he was not only a soloist: he re-introduced many neglected chamber works by Beethoven, Schubert, and Mozart into the repertory. One of his performance colleagues, Joseph Joachim, invited him to Berlin to teach at the Hochschule in 1905, where he remained for a decade.

Notwithstanding the demanding teaching load, Dohnányi managed to tour widely as a pianist, and he also squeezed in some time for composition. In 1914, he returned to the genre that had given him such an auspicious start—and the resulting Piano Quintet No. 2 in E-flat minor had its premiere that same year. It fully displays his mature creative skill, filled with mesmerizing passages of intensity, turmoil, melancholy, and rapture, yet achieving an almost euphoric serenity by the end.