



School of **MUSIC**

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA / COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Graduate String Quartet Concert

Ana Galdavadze, violin
Abigail Carpenter, violin
Melissa Milford, viola
Sean Muller, cello

Tuesday, November 4, 2025
5:10 p.m.
MUB 101

Program

Terzetto in C major, Op. 74

Antonin Dvořák
(1841-1904)

- I. Introduzione: Allegro ma non troppo*
- II. Larghetto*
- III. Scherzo: Vivace – Trio: Poco meno mosso*
- IV. Tema con Variazioni*

String Quartet No. 7, Op. 108

Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906-1975)

- I. Allegretto*
- II. Lento*
- III. Allegro*

Brief Intermission

Große Fuge, Op. 133

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the Graduate Assistantship.
The Graduate String Quartet is coached by Dr. Steven Thomas.

Program Notes

Antonin Dvorak - *Terzetto* in C major, Op. 74

Antonín Dvořák wrote the *Terzetto*, Op. 74, when he was already an established, successful composer. Being fond of the viola, he wrote this piece with the intention of playing the viola part himself, along with a violinist friend and his friend's student. Ultimately, the music proved too difficult for the student, so Dvořák composed a simpler piece. Op. 74 is a somewhat unusual trio because the violist, in the absence of a cellist, plays the bass line.

The opening movement is pleasant and lyrical, with moments of intensity that resolve back into peaceful agreement.

The ending leads directly into the *Larghetto* movement, which begins with a gentle melody in the first violin and is accompanied by supportive eighth notes in the viola and second violin. The middle section is bolder, opinionated, and characterized by a dotted rhythm passed between all three parts. Chromatically altered pitches destabilize the sense of the home key before returning to material from the opening.

In contrast to the first two movements, the third movement is an energized *scherzo*. Loud and carefree passages are contrasted with softer, *sul ponticello* portions that feel glassy and unsubstantial. The trio is simpler, relaxed, and easy to listen to.

The final movement is a journey of unexpected tempo changes, contrasting characters, dynamic rhythms, as well as passages in rhythmic unison (such as the final *molto allegro* leading up to the end of the piece). The layered texture and lack of a consistent melody line keeps the listener guessing what comes next until, with a burst of energy and flurry of notes, the ending is announced by unison octaves.

Dmitri Shostakovich - String Quartet no. 7

Composed in 1960, Shostakovich's Seventh String Quartet is characterized by a juxtaposition of the post-Stalin thaw and struggles within Shostakovich's own personal life. During this time, Shostakovich experienced many personal losses and romantic failures, and this quartet seems to be a space that he used to work through his own struggles. In addition, it is seen as a tribute to his first wife, Nina.

The first movement, *Allegretto*, is rooted in a character of light mockery, undercut by themes with a more ominous undertone in the lower strings. For example, the theme first featured in the first violin part sounds as though it trips over itself, with the lower strings bringing it to a halt with a sort of three-note knock.

The *lento*, as a whole, is an eerie movement, with all four instruments rarely playing at the same time. This second movement begins with an *ostinato* in the second violin, icy and glassy, painting a thin texture of distant desolation. The lower registers bring in ominous swells, thickening the texture all while the *ostinato* gets passed from voice to voice.

The third movement interrupts the deceptive serenity of the second, relating back to the first movement with a theme that trips upwards instead of down. Filled with counterpoint, Shostakovich cultivates a fugue that is complex and calculated, all within its chaos. The restatement of the first theme sounds bitter, ending with a disembodied waltz and one final knock on the door.

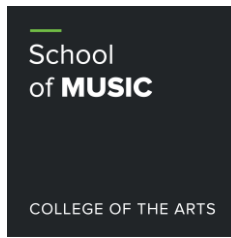
Ludwig van Beethoven - *Große Fuge*, Op. 133

Originally conceived as the finale to Beethoven's String Quartet in B-flat major, Op. 130, the *Große Fuge* ("Great Fugue") is one of the most uncompromising and visionary works of his late period. Written in 1825–26, it compresses an entire multi-movement journey into a single, colossal fugue of symphonic breadth.

The piece opens with an *Overtura*, a stern proclamation of the subject material: jagged intervals, harsh dotted rhythms, and a sense of elemental tension. From this grows the vast fugue proper, built on a subject of relentless energy that Beethoven subjects to musical trial by fire — inversion, augmentation, stretto, fragmentation, and ferocious contrapuntal layering. What follows is a sequence of intensely contrasting episodes, often described as "variations" on the subject, but closer in spirit to a philosophical exploration of identity and transformation. At times brutal and unyielding, at others unexpectedly lyrical, the music constantly wrestles with itself, as if enacting a drama of struggle and transcendence.

Its 1826 premiere left audiences bewildered by the scale and complexity of the writing; one critic called it "as incomprehensible as Chinese." Fearing the fugue would bury the reception of the entire quartet, Beethoven's publisher persuaded him to compose a more accessible new finale, after which the *Große Fuge* appeared as its own independent opus.

What listeners once regarded as impenetrable is now recognized as one of the towering achievements of Beethoven's late style: a work in which fugal craft becomes a vehicle for existential force — music that seems less "written" than wrestled from the edge of possibility.



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