

THE HENSCHEL STRING QUARTET

**Christoph Henschel, violin; Markus Henschel, violin
Monika Henschel-Schwind, viola; Mathias Beyer-Karlshøj, cello**

ARTICTIC VISION

We have 2 Jubilees in the programme: The birth of Haydn and the death of Mendelssohn, both in 1809. The three works fit very well together though they are very different from each another. Haydn is a very joyful piece, Mendelssohn, which is partly dramatic and the Schulhoff, which is also joyful, but very dramatic and breathtaking.

Haydn brought the string quartet to life. He not only wrote the first string quartets, but without him, the String Quartet surely would have developed much differently and much later. *Haydn's String Quartets, Op. 76*, composed in 1796 and 1797, were commissioned by and dedicated to Count Joseph Erdödy. The six quartets are the last complete set that Haydn composed. At this point he was at the peak of his career. These pieces are likely the best you can find in motive development in composition (as opposed to thematic development).

With Schulhoff's *Quartet No.1*, we want to introduce this great composer to the audience in Canada. It is a pity that people do played his work but as a 'niche' rather than part of a main repertoire. We fell in love with Schulhoff's music some years ago when, having heard some piano pieces, we started digging for his music and found his string quartets. At a time when there were still people like Bruch around, he was composing in a most avant-garde way. He was interested in everything going on. He played in a jazz orchestra himself and was influenced by that. He was still in his twenties when he wrote tonight's selection. Surely, had he not died prematurely, he would have been a composer of the likes of Haydn and Mendelssohn.

Mendelssohn is another markstone in history having brought a sort of melodic writing to composition. He was influenced by Beethoven but his way of writing is clearly different. It is much more horizontal than vertical, using scales and virtuoso lines in a different way. He was at the top of this romantic style of writing in this period. Mendelssohn composed *String Quartet No. 4 in E minor, Op. 44, No. 2*, in 1837. The piece is part of the Op. 44 set of 3 string quartets that he dedicated to the Crown Prince of Sweden and are among six numbered string quartets published during his lifetime. (Monika Henschel-Schwind)

