

“delightful Haydn and Mozart”

Stephen Smoliar, October 2015

THE NEW ESTERHÁZY QUARTET

Lisa Weiss, violin

Kati Kyme, violin

Anthony Martin, viola

William Skeen, violoncello

opening their **Tenth Season**, present:

Padre, Guida, ed Amico!

Celebrating the ongoing connection between Mozart and Haydn

Wolfgang Mozart (1756–1791):	Quartet in A, K. 169 (1773)
Joseph Haydn (1732–1809):	Quartet in F, Op. 77, No. 2 (1799)
Haydn	Quartet in C minor, Op. 17, No. 4 (1771)
Mozart	Quartet in D, K. 575 (1789)

Friday, September 16, 2016, at 8pm, Hillside Club, 2286 Cedar Street (at Spruce), Berkeley, 94709

tickets for this Friday concert are \$25, and are sold only at the door

Saturday, September 17, 2016, at 4pm, First Unitarian Universalist Chapel, 1187 Franklin Street, San Francisco, 94109

please note: this is across the street from our regular San Francisco venue!

Sunday, September 18, 2016, at 4pm, All Saints' Episcopal Church, 555 Waverley Street (at Hamilton), Palo Alto, 94301

Tickets for Saturday & Sunday are \$30 (discounts for seniors and students)

(415) 520-0611 // www.newesterhazy.org

San Francisco, August 19, 2016: **The New Esterházy Quartet**—voted **“Best Chamber Music Performers” in 2015 by San Francisco Classical Voice**—celebrate the ongoing connection between **Mozart and Haydn**, performing two quartets by each composer, including Mozart’s K. 575 and Haydn’s Op. 77, No 2. Mozart referred to Haydn as “Father, Guide, and Friend,” and recognized him as the only composer with whom he could converse, musically, on equal terms. The works on the program represent a figurative “dialogue” between the two geniuses. After all, the string quartet in itself was seen as a high-level exchange of ideas at the time, and was often even used to spark conversation in the drawing rooms of the aristocracy.

This program was initially scheduled as opener of the quartet’s previous season, but was

at that time replaced by a wonderful and successful program of Mozart and Haydn **trios**. The New Esterházy Quartet is happy to be able to now open their tenth season with it.

The members of the New Esterházy Quartet—violinists Lisa Weiss and Kati Kyme, violist Anthony Martin, and cellist William Skeen—often occupy the first chairs of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and other period music ensembles. With Haydn’s 68 quartets as their core repertoire, the New Esterházy Quartet is increasingly recognized as one of the world’s top period-instrument string quartets. The quartet has been praised for their “sumptuous sound with beautifully controlled dynamics” and recently received accolades in *Early Music America Magazine* for their *Haydn in America* CD.

Haydn’s practice of introducing humor and surprise into the dance movements of a string quartet clearly influenced Mozart’s quartet writing. At the time, a string quartet’s “Menuet” alluded to the formal ballroom dance, but it was in the more intimate drawing room, not in the formal ballroom, that string quartets were mostly performed. The publication of quartet compositions was also geared towards these private performances among family and friends at aristocratic homes. Since nobody would actually **dance** to the quartet music, the composer could allow himself some freedom in writing these movements. Already in his early quartets, Haydn started using the normally predictable dance rhythms as a platform for artistic adventure. Inspired by this, in the Menuetto of his Quartet in A, K. 169 (the first piece on this program), Mozart presents an oddly disjointed theme in which the principal line breaks off on the second and fourth downbeats—the very points where the dance step would usually demand graceful connection.

In the business of career advancement, Mozart was directly inspired by Haydn’s dedication of a set of quartets to the King of Prussia. Not too long after Haydn published his Opus 50 with the dedication to the King, Mozart set out to dedicate three of his own quartets (later known as the “Prussian Quartets”) to that same monarch. Haydn only decided on his dedication after he had already written the quartets, wishing to make a significant gesture in exchange for receiving an important gift from the King. Mozart however composed three quartets specifically for this “Cellist King,” thoughtfully and beautifully featuring the cello in most parts of these works, giving the instrument a much more prominent role within each quartet than Haydn had awarded it in his. Mozart’s Quartet in D, K. 575 is one of his finest, displaying grace, finesse, and ingenuity throughout the piece, culminating in the nimble, ever-changing ensemble play of the rondo finale. And, not forgetting Haydn, Mozart included a “punch line” ending in this final movement, completely worthy of his “Father, Guide, and Friend:” just as the curtain seems ready to come down, the second violin and viola insist on having the last word by reiterating the main theme once more in a dialogue. (To read New Esterházy Quartet’s story on Haydn and the King of Prussia from September 2013, please go to: http://newesterhazy.org/Press_files/NEQreleaseCellistKing.pdf)

In turn, Haydn was perhaps also influenced by Mozart. Haydn’s Quartet Op. 77, No 2, published some eight years after Mozart’s early death, immediately offers a Mozart-

style display of melody in the first movement. In the second movement, inspiration by Mozart might be heard in the beauty of line and in the sonority of ensemble.

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