FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

Talich Quartet
Petr Messiereur, violin
Jan Kvapil, violin
Jan Talich, viola
Evzen Rattay, cello

Sunday, November 15, 1992, 3:00 p.m.
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
University of the Pacific
Stockton, California

Program

Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 125, No. 1, D.87 — **Franz Schubert** (1797-1828)
- Allegro moderato
- Scherzo: Prestissimo
- Adagio
- Allegro

Quartet No. 2 in D minor — **Bedrich Smetana** (1824-1884)
- Allegro
- Allegro moderato. Andante cantabile
- Allegro non piu moderato ma agitato e con fuoco
- Finale: Presto

-Intermission-

Quartet in F major — **Maurice Ravel** (1875-1937)
- Allegro moderato - Très doux
- Assez vif - Très rhythmé
- Très lent
- Vif et agité

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The TALICH QUARTET is represented by Melvin Kaplan, Inc.,
115 College Street, Burlington, Vermont 05401

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Recordings: Calliope, Collins Classics

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The Talich Quartet will be quite literally without a country when it starts its third American tour in Stockton this afternoon.

One of Europe's most renowned ensembles, the Quartet is from Czechoslovakia, the strife-torn nation now split into two uneasy states. The Prague-based quartet is heard regularly in major concert halls throughout Europe.

When the Talich Quartet organized at the Prague Conservatory in 1964, its members took the name of the noted founder of the Czech Philharmonic (and uncle of the quartet's violist).

Since then it has become one of the world's most critically acclaimed ensembles, noted for its interpretations of Dvorak, Janacek and other great Czech composers.

"A perfect performance," said *Le Figaro* after a concert in Paris. "Harmony without a single fault, as scintillating as champagne." Said the *Vancouver Province:* "If it isn't already a national treasure, the Talich should be. What we had, simply, was perfection."

On the ensemble's first American tour in 1987 it was praised by critics in Boston, Cleveland, San Diego and Dallas. The Talich has made subsequent North American concert tours in 1988 and last year.

In Europe the ensemble performs regularly in France, Italy, Great Britain, Switzerland and Belgium, and in recent years it has made concert tours of the Near East, Japan, Australia and Indonesia.

The Talich appears annually at the major international music festivals in Europe, where in 1970 it was named Laureate of the European Festivals Association.

On the Calliope label the Quartet has recorded the works of all the great Czech composers, and for Collins Classics it has recorded four Bartok quartets and the complete string quartets of Beethoven.

Program Notes

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)
String Quartet in E Flat Major, Op. 125, No. 1, D. 87

The E flat quartet, considered the best of six very early quartets, was composed in November 1813 and published posthumously in 1830, as Op. 125, No. 1.

The principal subject group of the first movement has three motifs, all introduced by the first violin. A two-measure bridge of repeated syncopations in the viola leads to the second theme, not much different in character, but in the dominant (B flat major) key. The concluding theme, heard over an ongoing dotted-note (long-short) accompaniment, is closely related to the last of the first subject themes.

The high-speed Scherzo is full of wit and humor. The basic melodic and rhythmic figure is a quick grace note followed by a downward plunge. Schubert then presents the trio, a short contrasting legato interlude that sounds folklike in origin and the Scherzo returns for a full-length repeat.

The Adagio casts a mood similar to that of the first movement and, like the Allegro moderato, is organized in sonata form. All four players join in presenting the first theme at the very opening. The first violin then states the second theme against a throbbing background. A short development section carries the music back to a restatement of the themes from the exposition, and the movement ends quietly without a coda.

The bright, scintillating last movement is generally considered the high point of the quartet. The first theme consists of two delicate ascending staccato phrases with a series of three accented descending legato phrases. After extending this idea, Schubert introduces the second theme, played by the first violin over a staccato accompaniment. A unison starts the development section, which continues alternating loud and soft, until a regular recapitulation and short coda end the movement.

BEDRICH SMETANA (1824-1884)
Quartet No. 2 in D Minor

The first movement (Allegro) brings about a clash of moods between Smetana's rage at the loss of his hearing and the transparence of bucolic recollections. It is an extremely tightly woven movement in the second part of which felicity and despair end up by becoming interlocked with one another. The second movement is closely related to its counterpart in the E minor quartet. It begins with a polka which is overlaid with a sort of nostalgic remorse, and the polka returns, slightly slower, at the end. The third movement makes us hear, in the viola and the cellos, Smetana's deafness as if in a conch shell. Smetana knocks at his cell with sharp blows of the bow. Andante and Allegro alternate at increasingly briefer intervals. Never was an appeal for help more discreetly composed. The fourth movement, very short and concise, concludes the work like a list of the contents of the quartet and of Smetana's life. In the sublime last twelve bars the four instruments give way to the mirth of a man who is cornered in which some

have seen, not entirely without reason, the very essence of humor.

MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)
String Quartet in F Major

The quartet opens with a thematic group that contains two distinctive ideas: a rich, warmly scored melody involving the entire quartet and a first violin melody of similar character over rapid figures in the second violin and viola. After speeding up to a climax, the music quiets, and the soaring second theme is stated by the first violin and viola playing two octaves apart, producing a most striking tone color. Although the rest of the movement follows the dictates of regular sonata form, the precise writing, the exciting tonal effects, and the powerful climaxes make this a most impressive movement.

Ravel conjures up the sound of a Javanese *gamelan* orchestra in the swift-moving pizzicato opening of the second movement by having the outer instruments playing in 3/4 meter (three groups of two eighth notes to a measure), while the inner parts play in 6/8 meter (two groups of three eighths in the same measure). Trills and tremolos create a lustrous sheen as the movement continues. The cello alone plays a transition to the slow, moody middle section. Although they are not exactly parallel, the extremely lyrical themes here seem to grow from the second subject of the first movement. A shortened reprise of the opening section concludes the movement.

Ravel achieves an improvisatory rhapsodic feeling in the slow third movement, with its continually shifting tempi and episodic construction. He is also able, with consummate skill, to weave the opening melody of the quartet in with the new melodic content. As in the previous movements, there is an ever-changing progression of new and imaginative tone colors, a remarkable achievement, considering the fact Ravel had at his disposal only the four instruments, not the strings, winds, and percussion of a symphony orchestra.

The vigorous finale opens with an angry snarl followed by a long, held note, repeated twice before the movement starts moving forward. Its awkward five-beat meter, possibly Russian in inspiration, lends it an unsettling character. The rest of the movement alternates the contrasting expressive and lyrical melodies, including returns of the first movement theme, with repeats of the opening outburst.

The quartet, which was dedicated to Fauré, was introduced in Paris by the Heymann Quartet on March 5, 1904.

—Notes from *Guide to Chamber Music,* by Melvin Berger, ©1985

FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC 1992-93 SEASON

Presented in Cooperation with University of the Pacific and the UOP Conservatory of Music

Arioso Wind Quintet
Sunday, October 4, 3 p.m.

Talich String Quartet
Sunday, November 15, 3 p.m.

The Mannes Trio
Saturday, January 23, 8 p.m.

The Endellion String Quartet
Sunday, February 28, 3 p.m.

The Fine Arts Brass Quintet
Saturday, May 15, 8 p.m.

All 1992-93 concerts are presented in the Faye Spanos Concert Hall on the University of the Pacific Campus.

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The use of cameras and recording devices of any kind is forbidden.

Smoking in the lobby and auditorium is prohibited.

Please disengage pagers and electronic watches.

UOP students are admitted free on a space availability basis.

Concert programs are subject to change without notice.

Seating is unreserved for the 1992-93 season.

Contributions, including memorials, are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

For more information about Friends of Chamber Music, call 478-5106, or write P.O. Box 4874, Stockton, CA 95204.

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