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**TAKÁCS QUARTET**  
JANUARY 17, 2018

**BRAHMS: MAJOR, OP. 67**

**TAKÁCS QUARTET**  
JANUARY 17, 2018

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Welcome to our first concert of the new year, featuring some old friends—the members of the Takács Quartet. The ensemble has performed for AFCM eight times since we presented its first Tucson appearance in 1987. Interestingly, the composition they've performed most often for us is the relatively neglected second quartet of Bartók, a total of three times at one-decade intervals. If the pattern holds, you'll have to wait until the early 2020s to hear them play it again. There's no Bartók tonight; indeed, they've never played any of the items on this evening's program in Tucson before.

Before I let you focus on the music—yes, you are compelled to finish reading this page before you can continue with your life—I'd like to thank those of you who participated in our Year-End Campaign. I know there are a couple of you who hate it when we ask for money—you've told me so—but the truth is that in many cases, the only way some people will think to make a donation is if we make a direct appeal. We do that only twice a year, so in terms of today's fundraising practices, that's pretty low-key.

We had a great response, including participation by several new donors, and supplementary donations from people who'd already made a contribution last year. As you surely know, our low ticket prices cover only a portion of the costs of bringing you these concerts, so I, the AFCM board, and the other members of the audience should be very grateful to those of you who are able to step forward with donations.

On a sad note, it seems that every couple of months we hear of the passing of another stalwart AFCM audience member. We don't generally announce this sort of thing, but tonight I would like to recognize the loss of our good friend Jay Shah, a keen connoisseur of many things, including music, and one of our most devoted longtime audience members. Jay and his wife, Minna Mehta, had already planned to provide a half sponsorship of tonight's concert, and Minna has elected to extend that to a full sponsorship in Jay's memory.

*James Reel*

JAMES REEL  
*President*



# TAKÁCS QUARTET

## JANUARY 17, 2018

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### **Takács Quartet**

Edward Dusinberre, *violin*

Károly Schranz, *violin*

Geraldine Walther, *viola*

András Fejér, *cello*

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### **TAKÁCS QUARTET**

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The Takács Quartet, now entering its forty-third season, is renowned for the vitality of its interpretations. *The New York Times* recently lauded the ensemble for “revealing the familiar as unfamiliar, making the most traditional of works feel radical once more,” and the *Financial Times* described a recent concert at Wigmore Hall: “Even in the most fiendish repertoire these players show no fear, injecting the music with a heady sense of freedom. At the same time, though, there is an uncompromising attention to detail: neither a note nor a bow-hair is out of place.” Currently, the Takács Quartet performs eighty concerts a year worldwide.

Last season, the Takács presented complete six-concert cycles of Beethoven’s quartets in Wigmore Hall, at Princeton, the University of Michigan, and at UC Berkeley. Complementing these cycles, Edward Dusinberre’s book, *Beethoven for a Later Age: The Journey of a String Quartet*, was published in the UK by Faber and Faber and in North America by the University of Chicago Press. The book takes the reader inside the life of a string quartet, melding music history and memoir as it explores the circumstances surrounding the composition of Beethoven’s quartets.

The members of the Takács Quartet are Christoffersen Faculty Fellows at the University of Colorado Boulder and play on instruments generously loaned to them by a family Foundation. The Quartet has helped to develop a string program with a special emphasis on chamber music, where students work in a nurturing environment designed to help them develop their artistry. In addition, the Takács is a Visiting Quartet at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London.

AFCM last heard the Takács Quartet as part of our Evening Series in January 2014.

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TONIGHT’S PROGRAM

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**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)**

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*String Quartet in D Major, K. 575*

Allegretto  
Andante  
Menuetto: Allegretto  
Allegretto

**ERNŐ DOHNÁNYI (1877-1960)**

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*String Quartet No. 2 in D-flat Major, Op. 15*

Andante—Allegro  
Presto acciacato  
Molto adagio—Animato—Adagio—  
Andante—Allegro

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INTERMISSION

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**JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)**

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*String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 67*

Vivace  
Andante  
Agitato (Allegretto non troppo)  
Poco Allegretto con Variazioni

This evening’s concert is sponsored by the generous contribution of Minna Mehta-Shah, in memory of her husband, Jayant Shah.



IN 1789 MOZART TRAVELED to Potsdam with hopes of obtaining lucrative commissions from the music-loving Frederick William II of Prussia. While attending concerts at the palace, Mozart noted that Frederick participated as a competent cellist in the programs. When Frederick eventually commissioned several chamber works, Mozart decided to emphasize the king's own instrument—the cello. The resulting three “Prussian” Quartets build on the foundation that Mozart had established through close study of Haydn's string quartets, primarily his inventive Opus 33 (“Gli Scherzi”). However, Mozart's three Prussian Quartets further expand the form's lyrical range, because the cello fully participates as a melodic instrument rather than an accompanying voice.

Severe problems with both health and finances beset Mozart after his return to Vienna. He suffered from headaches and insomnia, possibly brought on by Constanze's difficult fifth pregnancy as well as their desperate poverty. After sending several of the requested six quartets to the king and receiving a muted response (possibly because the virtuoso cello scores exceeded the king's abilities), Mozart sold his three completed Prussian Quartets to the publisher Artaria for ready cash—but without a dedication to Frederick. Mozart wrote: “I have disposed of the quartets (all that toilsome work) for a mockery of a fee, only to keep myself going.” Although the many erasures in the manuscripts indicate that the work possibly was “toilsome,” the quartets develop with graceful elegance and lighthearted inventiveness.

Mozart wrote his K. 575, the first of his Prussian Quartets, within a month of his return to Vienna in June 1789. The Allegro develops two buoyant themes, the first stated by the violin and the second—in a forte dynamic—by the cello. The lyrical three-part Andante (A major) explores a melody based on Mozart's earlier song “Das Veilchen” (The Violet), his setting of a Goethe poem.

“I have disposed of the quartets  
(all that toilsome work) for a  
mockery of a fee, only to keep  
myself going.”

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

The delightful Menuetto (D major) is animated by strong dynamic contrasts. Its trio section (G major) showcases the cello with a recurring ornamented phrase in its upper register. The main theme of the Allegretto finale, introduced by the cello, is a rising arpeggio that recalls the first theme of the opening Allegro. A rondo in form, the movement develops with brilliantly contrasting interludes and inventive counterpoint.

ERNŐ DOHNÁNYI WAS A FIGURE of legendary musicianship. Ranked as one of the greatest pianists of all time, renowned as a conductor and a productive composer, he was one of Hungary's most eminent musicians until he was caught in the political crossfire of World War II. Although he had resigned from his directorial post at the Budapest Academy rather than observe anti-Semitic legislation, he obeyed a summons from the Arrow Cross party leader, who informed him of the new regime's plans for Hungary's musical life. As a result of this meeting, Dohnányi was placed on a short list of important Nazi collaborators. When he emigrated to the United States in 1949, he was cleared of all suspicions by US intelligence. However, Hungary's new communist regime, which Dohnányi vehemently opposed, continued to perpetuate rumors, and the composer's career suffered damage.

A prodigy, Dohnányi's early works caught the attention of Johannes Brahms, who arranged for the Viennese premiere of his Opus 1 Piano Quintet. The slightly later Opus 15 String Quartet (1906), written and premiered during Dohnányi's tenure at the Berlin Hochschule, shows strong influences of both his countryman Franz Liszt and Brahms in its richly romantic harmonies and sweeping lyrical

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lines. As in his Piano Quintet, an opening motto theme dominates the work since it recurs in a variety of forms throughout the quartet.

The violin introduces the motto theme of the first movement, which is freely cast in sonata form. Quicksilver tempo changes delineate the structure throughout. A rapid passage briefly interrupts the serene introduction; the allegro section returns with a second thematic idea heard in the violin. After a brief development of ideas, the introductory motto is recapitulated in the violin as the cello articulates a pizzicato accompaniment.

The Presto acciacato (very fast and bruising) is a demonic F minor scherzo launched by a propulsive rhythmic pattern in the cello. Ominous chords intrude. The trio section of this ABA form movement suggests a healing hymn inspired by the Doxology. The “bruising” opening material returns, and the movement concludes with the flourish of a unison chord.

The substantial finale (C-sharp minor) develops with dramatic changes of tempo. The movement opens quietly with a sustained hymnlike phrase that recalls the trio section of the preceding movement. Faster note values are gradually insinuated, and after a brief pause the forceful theme from the preceding scherzo returns abruptly. Ideas from the opening movement return, and the first violin recalls the motto theme. An ethereal viola statement accompanied by the two violins conjures a serene mood. Agitated mutterings intrude from the second violin, and the tempo accelerates. In the ensuing Andante section the opening motto is restated, and the two violins ascend steadily higher into their upper registers. The tempo quickens, but the movement soon concludes with a quiet statement of the motto theme.

**ALTHOUGH EACH OF BRAHMS’S** three surviving quartets was published within a two-year period (1874–75), he had refined and polished their movements for over two decades. Brahms completed Opus 67, the third and final quartet of the set, during the last stages of composing his First Symphony (a fourteen-year project). Possibly a welcome respite from these ardors, the quartet strikes a joyous spirit at the outset—the opening melody suggests a vigorous hunting fanfare. Like Mozart’s eponymous “Hunt” Quartet in B-flat Major, K. 458, “The Hunt” has also become a popular nickname for Brahms’s quartet. Brahms initially described the work as a “trifle” but later admitted it was the favorite of his string quartets.

The exuberant Vivace derives much of its energy from unexpected accents and the juxtaposition of differing rhythms. Its three contrasting themes are developed in sonata form; a brilliant coda based on the hunting theme concludes the movement. The Andante (F major) is cast in three-part song form. At its center, the serene opening melody is interrupted by emphatic, declamatory chords and terse rhythms. After a ritardando, the cello brings a return of the opening idea in a passage marked “sweet and graceful.” Subtle syncopations energize the tranquil conclusion.

Brahms described the D minor Agitato (enigmatically notated “moderately allegro but not too much”) as “the most tender and most impassioned movement I have ever written.” A complex intermezzo, the movement begins with all strings muted except the viola, which urgently carries the melodic weight. A central trio section (A minor) offers a flowing contrast. The opening material returns, and the movement concludes with a pianissimo coda.

The finale (B-flat major) offers eight variations on a folklike theme. After an excursion into the remote key of G-flat major (six flats), the hunt theme developed in the first movement returns at variation seven. A soft and sinuous passage in B-flat minor leads to an assertive coda (B-flat major) that combines the movement’s opening theme with the hunt motif.

Notes by Nancy Monsman

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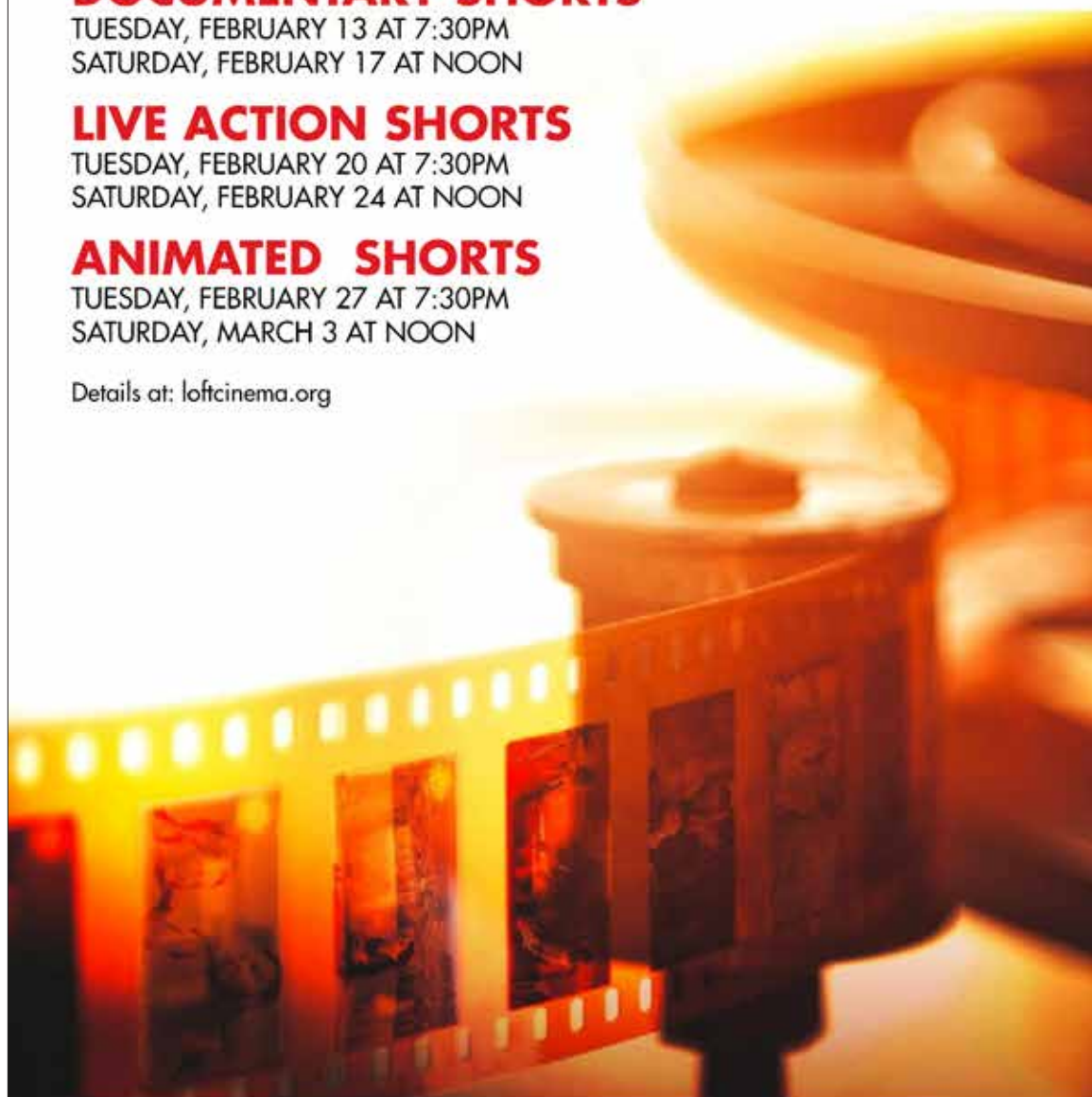
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## **Jasper String Quartet**

Wednesday, February 14, 2018, 7:30 pm  
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## **Rémi Geniet, *piano***

Sunday, February 25, 2018, 3:00 pm  
Berger Performing Arts Center

## **Wu Han / Philip Setzer / David Finckel**

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Leo Rich Theater

## **Wu Han / Philip Setzer / David Finckel**

### **Complete Beethoven Piano Trios II**

Thursday, March 29, 2018, 7:30 pm  
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## **Andrei Ionita, *cello***

Sunday, April 15, 2018, 3:00 pm  
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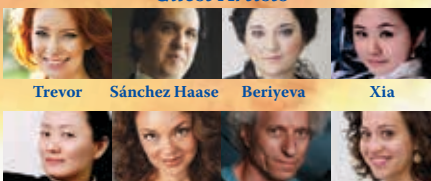
**November 18-19** Paraguay's acclaimed Diego Sánchez Haase conducts Beethoven's "Pastoral" and Rachmaninov's third piano concerto with returning soloist Tbilisi-born Yelena Beriyeve.

**January 27-28** The Chinese Concert features UA faculty member Jing Xia on the guzheng and Xiaoyin Xheng on the erhu. Composers are Lu Qiming, Xhou Yuguo, Liu Wenjin and Wang Liping and Larry Lang.

**March 10-11** SASO's favorite soprano, ChristiAmonson, performs Barber's *Knoxville Summer of 1915*, then joins voices with the SASO Chorus for Poulenc's Gloria.

**April 14-15** Christopher Theofanidis' *Rainbow Body*, Wieniawski's Violin Concerto No. 1 with TSO concertmaster Lauren Roth and Rachmaninov's Symphonic Dances.

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# BERNSTEIN BASH





IN

## *Romantics*

BY LISEL MUELLER

### *Johannes Brahms and Clara Schumann*

The modern biographers worry  
“how far it went,” their tender friendship.  
They wonder just what it means  
when he writes he thinks of her constantly,  
his guardian angel, beloved friend.  
The modern biographers ask  
the rude, irrelevant question  
of our age, as if the event  
of two bodies meshing together  
establishes the degree of love,  
forgetting how softly Eros walked  
in the nineteenth century, how a hand  
held overlong or a gaze anchored  
in someone’s eyes could unseat a heart,  
and nuances of address not known  
in our egalitarian language  
could make the redolent air  
tremble and shimmer with the heat  
of possibility. Each time I hear  
the Intermezzi, sad  
and lavish in their tenderness,  
I imagine the two of them  
sitting in a garden  
among late-blooming roses  
and dark cascades of leaves,  
letting the landscape speak for them,  
leaving us nothing to overhear.



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## BOARD PROFILE: NANCY BISSELL

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**AFCM is managed by an all-volunteer board of directors. We asked board member Nancy Bissell to tell us about her involvement with AFCM.**

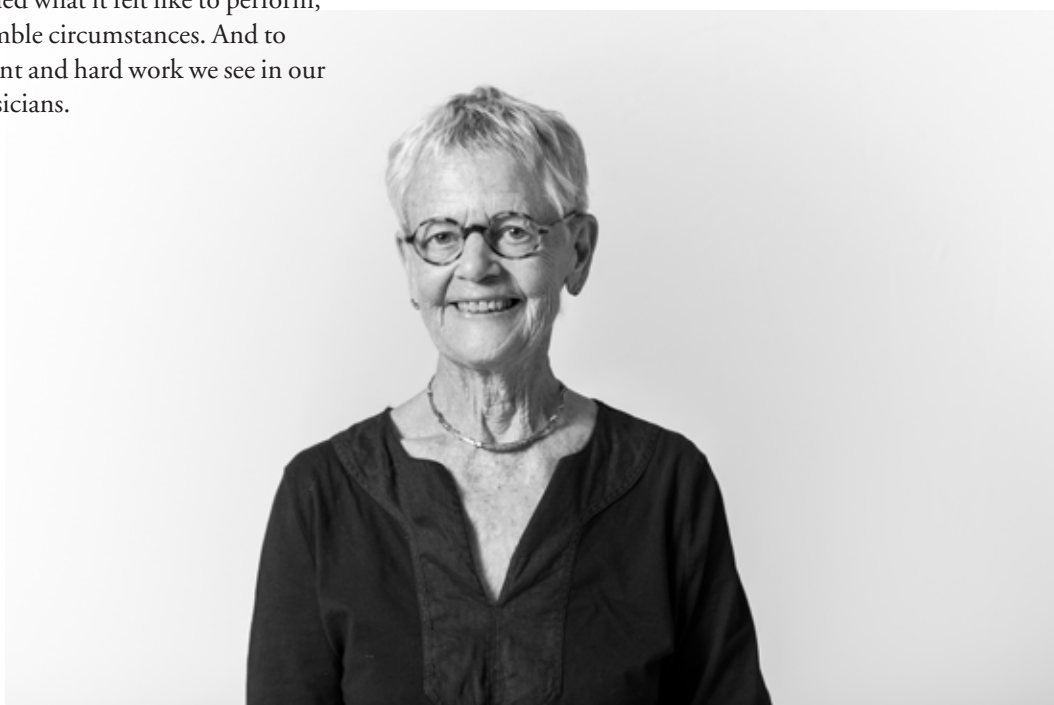
Nancy Bissell: My long history with AFCM began in the 1970s when I stood in the “student rush” line for tickets. I worked my way up, finally securing a season ticket, and later joining the board for what I thought would be a two-year commitment. That was in 1994. Today, I serve in a variety of ways, primarily helping out with the Winter Chamber Music Festival and with various organizational tasks.

More than anything, I want to see the next generation of music lovers fill the hall. To that end, the planning that goes on both in board meetings and in informal sessions with colleagues and community members, pushes me to consider the balance between tradition and innovation, and to question my own assumptions about chamber music, past, present, and future: to be open to the new while loving the old.

I have been fortunate to experience music not just as a listener, but from the inside out, having taken up the cello in midlife and kept it up for 25 years before hanging up my bow two years ago. As an amateur player, I learned to listen in a more discerning way, which of course led to greater pleasure and enjoyment. I learned what it felt like to perform, albeit in more humble circumstances. And to appreciate the talent and hard work we see in our extraordinary musicians.

To judge by the buzz in the lobby during intermissions, chamber music has a truly magical appeal. It could have to do with the intimacy of the genre and, unlike the experience of an opera or symphony, the close proximity of the performers. This feeling is echoed by young elementary students who cheer wildly when they hear the string quartets who visit their schools as part of AFCM’s outreach program to youth. They want to get right up close, touch the instruments, talk to the musicians, and share their own musical experiences.

Now in retirement, I have—I hope—years ahead to broaden my musical horizons. And to deepen my musical connections. Nothing could be better.



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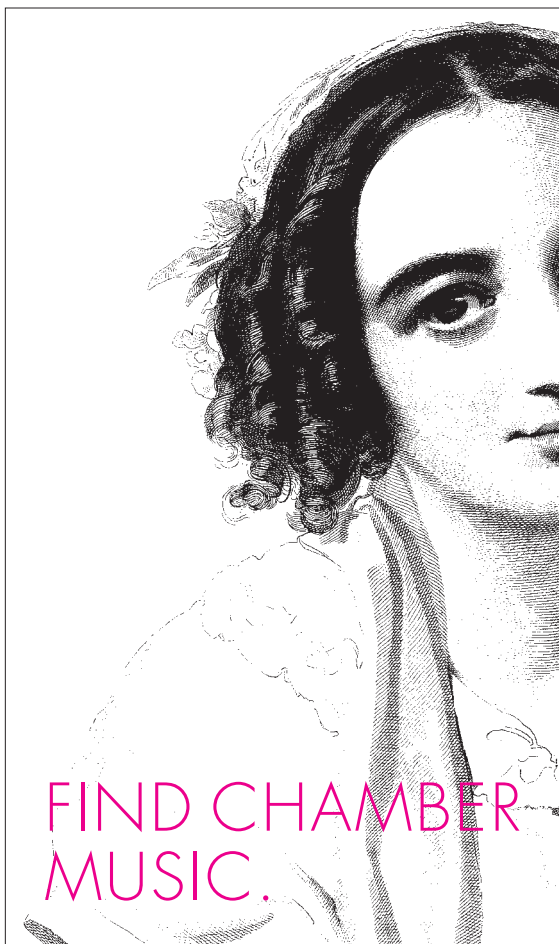


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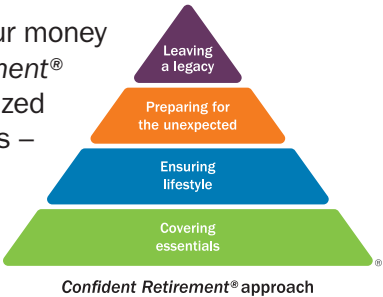
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