



Killinger Family Stage at Lauridsen Amphitheater, Water Works Park  
Friday, August 2, 2019

**DVORÁK String Quartet No. 12, "American", Op. 96 in F**

- I. Allegro ma non troppo
- II. Lento
- III. Molto vivace
- IV. Finale - Vivace ma non troppo

Antonín Dvorák (1841-1904) was a Romantic period composer who produced 14 string quartets during his lifetime. Dvorák composed String Quartet No. 12, "American", Op. 96 in F during the summer of 1893 while on vacation in Spillville in northeast Iowa, home to a Czech immigrant community. Dvořák sketched the quartet in three days and completed it in thirteen more days, finishing the score with the comment "Thank God! I am content. It was fast." The result is one of Dvorák's most well-recognized works.

Fascinated by Native and African-American music, Dvorák mixed these new colors with his own musical background throughout this quartet. Many of the themes are derived from the pentatonic scale, a scale made up of five notes rather than the traditional eight-tone scale. The piece is also filled with an abundance of accented notes on off beats, also known as syncopation, as well as foot-tapping rhythms.

The first movement, Allegro ma non troppo, begins with a happy tune by the viola, eventually followed by a response in F minor by the second violinist in the development just before the recapitulation. The second movement, Lento, follows Dvorák's famous slow style. The third movement, Molto vivace, is quite rhythmic and playful. According to Dvorák, birdsong can be heard throughout the movement in the first violin. The Finale, Vivace ma non troppo, is filled with energy and syncopated rhythms heard within the second violin and the viola. Above this rhythmic accompaniment, the first violin sings freely.