

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

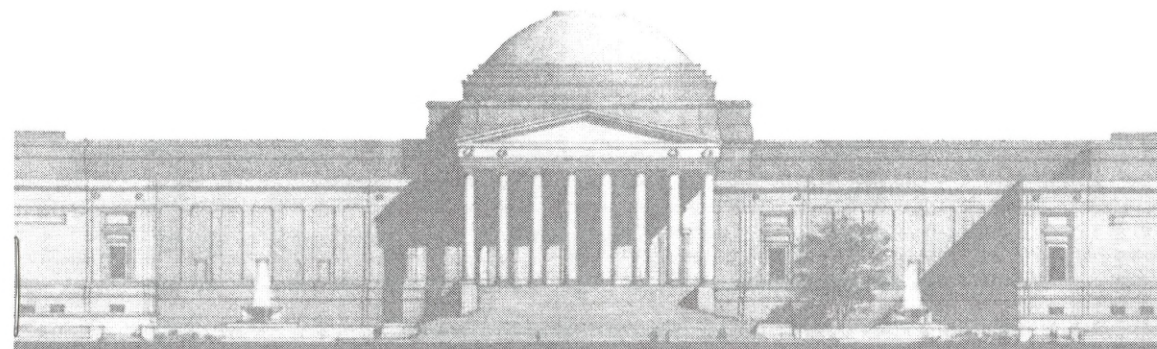
Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

For the convenience of concertgoers, the Garden Café remains open for light refreshments until 6:00 pm on Sundays.

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

www.nga.gov

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The Seventy-first Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,950th Concert

Gabrielius Alekna, pianist

Presented in collaboration with the
Delegation of the European Union to the United States

May 26, 2013
Sunday, 4 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)

Nocturne no. 6 in D-flat Major, op. 63

Grazyna Bacewicz (1909–1969)

Sonata no. 2

Maestoso; agitato

Largo

Toccata: Vivo

Vytautas Bacevičius (1905–1970)

Šeštas žodis / Sixième mot, op. 72 (Sixth Word)

Franz Liszt (1811–1866)

Hungarian Rhapsody no. 12, S. 244/12

The Musician

The first Lithuanian to hold a doctor of musical arts degree from the Juilliard School of Music, Gabrielius Alekna has appeared as a soloist with the Belarus State Symphony, Juilliard, New Amsterdam Symphony, and Vienna Radio symphony orchestras. Featured regularly with Lithuania's National Symphony, State Symphony, Lithuanian Chamber, and Saint Christopher Chamber orchestras, he has garnered more than a dozen top prizes in competitions on both sides of the Atlantic. His recording of the complete *Mots* (Words) by Lithuanian composer Vytautas Bacevičius was released last year on the British label Toccata Classics.

Alekna's recent engagements have included solo recitals at Adelphi University; in Greenwich, Connecticut's Bruce Museum; New York's Deutsches Haus; Vienna's Musikverein, Bösendorfer Saal, and Stadtsalon; and a recital tour of ten Canadian and American cities marking the one-hundredth anniversary of the death of Lithuania's most important composer and painter, Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875–1911). In the 2012–2013 concert season, Alekna's performances have included Witold Lutoslawski's *Piano Concerto* with the Belarus State Symphony Orchestra, solo recitals at New York's Weill Recital Hall and at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva, and concerts in numerous cities and festivals in Lithuania. A visiting associate professor since 2011 at the Music Academy of Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania, he is the cofounder of a new arts academy, which debuts this summer in Birštonas, Lithuania.

Born in Vilnius, Lithuania, Alekna began his music studies at age five. After graduating from the M. K. Čiurlionis Arts Gymnasium in Vilnius, he continued his studies at the Lithuanian Music Academy. In 1996 he was invited to attend the Juilliard School, where he studied with Jerome Lowenthal, receiving the bachelor of music, master of music, and doctor of musical arts degrees.

Program Notes

This afternoon's concert represents Lithuania in a series generated by the Delegation of the European Union to the United States in collaboration with the National Gallery of Art and the Katzen Arts Center at American University, the Kennedy Center, and the Phillips Collection. Dubbing the month of May as "The European Month of Culture," the Delegation is presenting twenty-nine concerts in the above-mentioned venues that represent all twenty-seven countries in the European Union. The final concert of the series will be held at the Gallery on Wednesday, May 29, 2013, at 12:10 pm. Violinist Bruno Nasta and pianist Danielle DeSwert Hahn, both members of the National Gallery of Art Chamber Players, will perform music from Belgium, Estonia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, and Slovakia.

A program of Lithuanian music provides an ideal opportunity to juxtapose compositions by the siblings Vytautas Bacevičius (1905–1970) and Grażyna Bacewicz (1909–1969). Separated to some extent by personal choice, but also by fate—Grażyna spent her entire life in Poland; Vytautas chose to live in Lithuania, but was forced to seek asylum in the United States when a concert tour in this country was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II—the siblings are reunited through their music. Both composers were also prominent concert virtuosos who in their performances promoted their compositions alongside more familiar pieces of the classical canon. Continuing with the idea of juxtaposition, the program features examples of their work as well as standard repertoire by Fauré and Liszt.

Although Gabriel Fauré did not profess to have Chopin's nocturnes in mind when he wrote his own works in the same genre, the nocturnes of both composers share an atmosphere of reverie and quiet contemplation. Fauré's thirteen nocturnes are acknowledged by connoisseurs of French piano music to be among his finest pieces, expressing loneliness, despair, and brooding to an extent that his earlier works did not explore. *Nocturne no. 6 in D-flat Major*, the longest of the series, shares the rapturous expression found in

Fauré's song cycle *La bonne Chanson*, which was completed the same year (1894). The basic A–B–A form, usually applied to nocturnes, is here extended by the addition of an extra episode before the final return of the opening theme.

Grażyna Bacewicz was born in Łódź, Poland. Her father, Wincenty Bacewicz, provided her first piano and violin lessons. From 1928 to 1932, she studied the violin with Józef Jarzębski, piano with Józef Turczyński, and composition with Kazimierz Sikorski. She continued her education at the École Normale de Musique in Paris, having been granted a stipend by the famous pianist Ignacy Jan Paderewski, who was at that time the president of Poland. In Paris she studied composition with Nadia Boulanger and violin with André Touret. After completing her studies, Bacewicz returned to Poland, where she was appointed principal violinist of the Polish Radio Orchestra, which occasionally performed her music. In spite of the ravages of World War II, Bacewicz continued to compose, and gave underground secret concerts in Warsaw. Following the war, she was named professor at the State Conservatory of Music in Łódź. After a serious automobile accident in 1954 left her unable to play the violin, she focused on composing, earning important awards and commissions.

Vytautas Bacevičius was Lithuania's leading avant-garde composer in the period between the two world wars. In 1932 he was identified by his fellow Lithuanian composer Jeronimas Kačinskas (1907–2005) as "the first Lithuanian composer who leans towards contemporary European musical culture." Bacevičius' large legacy of piano and symphonic works is widely seen as the most significant and compelling body of Lithuanian music produced between 1900 and the 1960s. Born to a Lithuanian father and a Polish mother, he was a symbolic figure who linked Lithuania's national cultural identity with a wider international context. He was on tour in 1939 when the Germans invaded Lithuania, rendering him an exile in America. He took up residence in New York City, taught at various conservatories, and gave eight recitals at Carnegie Hall, but he devoted his primary efforts to composition and writing about new music, which he defended vigorously. He never returned to Lithuania, and died in New York in 1970.

Noted for their difficulty and a favorite of virtuoso pianists ever since they were composed in the 1850s, Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* are the works for which he is best known to the general public. Their popularity increased dramatically after the 1880s, when Liszt and the Polish conductor and composer Franz Doppler transcribed them for symphony orchestra. They are marked by sudden and extreme changes of tempo, corresponding to the same feature in Hungarian folk dancing, "lassú" (slow) and "friss" (fast).

Program Notes by Gabrielius Alekna

Upcoming Concerts at the National Gallery of Art

National Gallery of Art Chamber Players

Music by composers from Luxembourg, Malta,
and other European Union countries

In collaboration with the
Delegation of the European Union
to the United States

May 29, 2013
Wednesday, 12:10 pm
East Building Auditorium



Inscape Chamber Orchestra

Music by Stravinsky
and other composers

Presented in honor of
Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes, 1909 – 1929:
When Art Danced with Music

Sponsored in part by the
Billy Rose Foundation

June 2, 2013
Sunday, 6:30 pm
East Building Auditorium