

# 74TH SEASON OF CONCERTS

JANUARY 24, 2016 • NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



# PROGRAM

3:30 • West Building, West Garden Court

Aspen String Trio

David Perry, Violin

Victoria Chiang, Viola

Michael Mermagen, Cello

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

*The Goldberg Variations*, BWV 988

Transcription for string trio by Dmitry Sitkovetsky

Performed without intermission

Aria

Variation 1

Variation 2

Variation 3: Canon on the unison

Variation 4

Variation 5

Variation 6: Canon on the second

Variation 7

Variation 8

Variation 9: Canon on the third

Variation 10: Fughetta

Variation 11

Variation 12: Canon on the fourth

Variation 13

Variation 14

Variation 15: Canon on the fifth

Variation 16: Overture

Variation 17

Variation 18: Canon on the sixth

Variation 19

Variation 20

Variation 21: Canon on the seventh

Variation 22: Alla breve

Variation 23

Variation 24: Canon on the octave

Variation 25

Variation 26

Variation 27: Canon on the ninth

Variation 28

Variation 29

Variation 30: Quodlibet

Aria da capo

## The Musicians

Sold-out houses and standing ovations characterize the performances of the renowned Aspen String Trio. After more than twenty years of friendship and music-making, Aspen String Trio members David Perry, Victoria Chiang, and Michael Mermagen are an ensemble with magical synergy. These three world-class instrumentalists each have a long-time association as artist-faculty with the Aspen Music Festival; combined they have performed across the globe in the world's most prestigious venues. "The energy, spontaneity, and sheer enjoyment we find together is a constant inspiration to us, and a joy to our audiences!"

The ensemble delights in offering — with humor and insight — virtuoso performances of the rich string trio repertoire, including works by Beethoven, Mozart, and Schubert, as well as lesser-known blockbuster works by Dohnányi, Hindemith, Martinů, Rozsa, Klein, Veress, Villa-Lobos, and Ysaÿe, among others. Recent and upcoming performances and residencies include Chicago, the Los Angeles Music Guild, Texas, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, the University of Delaware, and Baltimore, where for six seasons the trio was the ensemble-in-residence at the University of Baltimore. A notable upcoming recording project includes the string trios and other music of Martinů for the Naxos label. A regular on Baltimore's classical station WBJC, the Aspen String Trio is regularly featured on *Face the Music* and *Music in Maryland*.

## Program Notes

Johann Sebastian Bach's monumental work, the *Goldberg Variations*, BWV 988, was composed in 1741. The story of the work's origin, perhaps apocryphal, is nonetheless compelling: Bach received a commission for a set of keyboard variations from Count Kaiserling, the insomniac Russian ambassador to the Saxon Court. Johann Gottlieb Goldberg, a talented harpsichordist and one of Count Kaiserling's musicians, performed the work for the count at his bedtime to help aid his sleep.

This complex work of genius consists of an aria and a set of thirty variations, based on the bass line of the theme. Every third variation is a canon: variation three is a canon at the unison, variation six is a canon at the second, variation nine is a canon at the third, and so on until variation twenty-seven, which is a canon at the ninth. The variations following each canon are genre pieces of different types, including some Baroque dances, a fugue, and a French overture. The variations following the genre pieces are virtuosic movements.

Inspired by the 1981 Glenn Gould recording, Russian violinist Dmitry Sitkovetsky transcribed Bach's masterpiece for string trio in 1984. This transcription was then followed by a version for string orchestra that has been performed worldwide.

*Program notes by Victoria Chiang*

## Upcoming events of the Seventy-Fourth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin Concerts

National Gallery of Art Vocal Ensemble  
Songs inspired by mythology. Presented  
in honor of *Power and Pathos: Bronze  
Sculptures of the Hellenistic World*  
January 31, Sunday, 3:30  
West Building, West Garden Court

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Cantus  
*The Four Loves*  
February 7, Sunday, 3:30  
West Building, West Garden Court

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Cann Duo  
Music from the African diaspora, including  
works by Leonard Bernstein, Margaret  
Bonds, Stephen Foster, Astor Piazzolla,  
and George Walker. Presented in honor of  
African American History Month  
February 14, Sunday, 3:30  
West Building, West Garden Court

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Bennewitz Quartet  
Music by Czech composers  
February 21, Sunday, 3:30  
West Building, West Garden Court

## General Information

Admission to the National Gallery of Art  
and all of its programs is free of charge,  
except as noted.

The use of cameras or recording equipment  
during the performance is not allowed.  
Please be sure that all portable electronic  
devices are turned off.

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