



The Sixty-sixth Season of  
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin  
**Concerts**

National Gallery of Art  
2,660th Concert

**National Gallery Chamber Players Piano Trio**

Luke Wedge, *violin*  
Benjamin R. Wensel, *cello*  
Danielle DeSwert, *piano*

February 24, 2008  
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm  
West Building, West Garden Court

*Admission free*

## Program

Antonin Dvořák (1841–1904)

*Piano Trio in E Minor*, op. 90 (“Dumky”)

Lento maestoso; allegro vivace (quasi doppio movimento);

tempo primo; allegro molto

Poco adagio; vivace non troppo

Andante; vivace non troppo; andante; allegretto

Andante moderato (quasi tempo di marcia); allegretto scherzando;

meno mosso; allegro; moderato

Allegro

Lento maestoso; vivace (quasi doppio movimento); lento; vivace

Paul Schoenfield (b. 1947)

*Café Music* (1985)

Allegro

Andante Moderato: Rubato

Presto

## **INTERMISSION**

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

*Piano Trio* (1914)

Modéré

Pantoum

Passacaille: Très large

Finale: Animé

## The Musicians

### **LUKE WEDGE**

Luke Wedge received a master of music degree in violin performance from Northwestern University and a bachelor of arts degree in English Literature from the University of Kansas. His principal instructors included David Perry, Gerardo Ribeiro, and Ben Sayevich. Wedge has made solo and recital appearances in Chicago; Lawrence, Kansas; and Washington, DC. He is an experienced orchestral musician and has been engaged by the National Gallery Orchestra, the National Symphony, and the Ravinia Festival, among others. He is a member of the United States Air Force Strings and, since 2003, has been a member of the Covington String Quartet, which was the quartet-in-residence at Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania from 2003 to 2006.

### **BENJAMIN R. WENSEL**

Benjamin R. Wensel holds degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music and Eastman School of Music. He has performed in seminars and master classes for members of the Cleveland, Guaneri, Juilliard, Miami, and Ying quartets; studied chamber music with Peter Salaff and members of the Audubon and Cavani Quartets; and participated in solo master classes with Clemens Michael Hagen, Steven Isserlis, and Michel Strauss.

Wensel has performed with the National Symphony Orchestra, the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra, the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Syracuse Symphony as well as with many fine local ensembles. A founding member of the Tarab Cello Ensemble, Wensel performed in the premieres of more than twenty new works written by established and emerging American composers, and participated in the ensemble's residencies at Princeton University, Stetson University, and the University of South Florida. He taught chamber music and maintained a studio at the Hochstein School of Music in Rochester, New York, where he was the cellist of the Hochstein String Quartet.

Currently a member of the faculty at the Washington Conservatory, Wensel maintains a private studio in Arlington, Virginia, and plays with the newly formed Messaien Quartet as well as the National Gallery Chamber Players Piano Trio. He can be heard on recordings produced by the Bridge, Harmonia Mundi, and Summit record labels.

**DANIELLE DESWERT**

Brussels-born pianist Danielle DeSwert is a freelance collaborative pianist and coach, and the music program specialist at the National Gallery of Art. She has worked as a pianist and coach with the Ash Lawn Highland Opera Festival, Chautauqua Opera, Indianapolis Opera, Kentucky Opera, the New Orleans Opera Association, Portland (Oregon) Opera, the San Francisco Opera Center, Sarasota Opera, and the Washington National Opera. From 2004 to 2006 she was the principal repetiteur with the Baltimore Opera Company and Washington Concert Opera.

She performs regularly in chamber music and voice recitals, including performances at the Arts Club of Washington, the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington, the Kennedy Center, the Mexican Institute of Culture, the National Gallery, the Russian Embassy, and the White House. She is principal pianist with the Inscape Chamber Music Project. She holds a master of music degree from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where she studied with Martin Katz, and a bachelor of music degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara. She also studied with Warren Jones and Anne Epperson at the Music Academy of the West and was an apprentice coach with the Washington Opera, working with Placido Domingo.

## Program notes

Antonin Dvořák began to compose his *Piano Trio*, opus 90, in 1890, at which point he had achieved a great deal of international fame and had developed a distinctive and personal style of composition. He saw it as his mission to amalgamate regional music from his native Bohemia with the classical traditions he had grown to love as a student. The *Piano Trio in E Minor* represents the perfect melding of the two traditions—folk art and chamber music.

“The Dumky Trio” is the most famous of Dvořák’s four piano trios and one of the most familiar in the repertoire. Abandoning the traditional four-movement formal scheme, Dvořák made the unorthodox and unique choice to set six *dumky* in succession. A Ukranian term, *dumka* literally means “melancholy” or “lament,” and describes vocal or instrumental works with a brooding quality, which can vary in tempo. Formally the *dumka* is simple—typically binary, occasionally ternary—and in the case of this work, each section is in a different key. Dvořák creates a unified work out of these six different folklike themes by interweaving different moods, and alternating in each movement between somber and light-hearted moments.

If “The Dumky Trio” represents the height of Czech nationalism in a classical form, *Café Music* could be the epitome of American style in chamber music. Paul Schoenfield brilliantly combines all facets of popular idioms—blues, Broadway melodies, ragtime, and spirituals—into a neat, classically modeled piece in three movements. In the composer’s words: “The idea to compose *Café Music* first came to me in 1985 after sitting in one night for the pianist of the house trio at Murray’s Restaurant in Minneapolis. My intention was to write a kind of high-class [dinner] music which could be played at a restaurant, but might also (just barely) find its way into a concert hall.”

Detroit-born composer Paul Schoenfield began his musical studies at age six, and wrote his first composition the following year. He studied piano and had an active performing career, but in recent years he has concentrated on composing. An avid scholar of Hebrew studies, his interest in folk music blends well with exploration of his Jewish roots. He currently lives in Israel.

By the time Maurice Ravel applied himself to writing a piano trio in an intense five weeks at the end of the summer of 1914, he had been contemplating doing so for eight years. World War I had broken out in Europe, and Ravel was eager to enlist. (To his disappointment, he was rejected, due to his small stature, but he was allowed to become an orderly, driving an ambulance.) His one and only piano trio is considered to be his finest work of chamber music. Despite the fact that he professed not to find piano and strings compatible partners, Ravel achieved a stunning synthesis of tonality, form, and style, requiring virtuosity from all three players and exploiting each instrument to its fullest .

The first movement (*Modéré*) is written in an unusual off-kilter 3-2-3 meter, which swings gracefully throughout it. Based on Basque themes, which Ravel had intended to make into a piano concerto, this movement is in sonata form. The second movement, *Pantoum*, is from a Malayan form of verse, *pantun*, in which the second and fourth lines of one quatrain are repeated in the next quatrain as the first and third lines. Ravel adhered strictly to this form and imposed an additional formal requirement: superimposing one theme upon the other in the center of the movement.

A passacaglia follows, giving the listener a moment of contemplation following the whirling scherzo of the second movement. Using the baroque variation form, Ravel gives the theme to the solo piano in the first eight bars, builds through the successive variations to a climax, and then ebbs away into a quiet close played again by the piano alone. The finale breaks in with a high tremolo in the strings, and continues at a frenetic pace, including trumpetlike calls in the piano, until the dramatic conclusion.

*Program notes by Danielle DeSwert*

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

Celeste Headlee, *soprano*, and Danielle DeSwert, *pianist*

Music by William Grant Still

February 27, 2008

Wednesday Afternoon, 12:10 pm

West Building Lecture Hall



**Washington National Cathedral Choir of Men and Girls**

Music by Allegri, Domenico Scarlatti, and Tallis

March 2, 2008

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

For the convenience of concertgoers  
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

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.

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