- 1) (a piano solo movement)... Radiance, but of a subdued sort;
- 2) the most 'human' movement perhaps *Intimacy*, again of a subdued sort:
- 3) at last some Speed, falling into an ABA shape, in this case, defined as such mostly by soft, LOUD, soft;
- 4) the return of movement no. 1, the piano being joined by the other three instruments, thus altering somewhat the percep-
- 5) a good-natured finale. The title of the movement, Coda the *Players Gossip*, pretty well describes one way of looking at it."

Robert Helps, American pianist and teacher, studied piano in New York with Abby Whiteside and composition with Roger Sessions (1943–1956). In addition he took courses at Columbia University (1947–1949) and the University of California at Berkeley (1949– 1951). In 1966 Helps received a Guggenheim fellowship. He has taught at Princeton University, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the University of California at Berkeley, the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, the Manhattan School of Music, and since 1978 at the University of Southern Florida. He has written works in many musical forms: Symphony; Cortège for Orchestra;, Recollections for Piano; Gossamer Noons for Soprano and Orchestra; Fantasy for Violin and Piano; Quintet for Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Cello, and Piano; and two piano concertos, among others.

Brahms' Piano Quartet No. 3 in C Minor, Opus 60, was begun by the composer in 1855, but was not completed and performed until 1875. Brahms himself was at the piano, performing with members of the Helmesberger Quartet. The chamber music of Brahms possesses such symphonic qualities that Schoenberg (who saw Brahms in the role of a "futurist") wrote an essay on him with the alluring title Brahms, the Progressive. In his essay, Schoenberg delves into Brahms' motivic interrelationships and complexity of phrase rhythm, all pointing toward an "unrestricted musical language." That language culminated, in Schoenberg's view, in the twelve-tone music of his own creation. Schoenberg did not write about Brahms' piano quartets in his essay, but paid them the ultimate honor of orchestrating one of them in 1937.

The presence of a Sturm und Drang period in Brahms' life is quite evident in the first movement of the Piano Quartet, a fact reiterated by Brahms himself in a contemporary reference to Goethe's Werther on the verge of suicide. The second movement, a *Scherzo* in minor key, is so concise that there is no space for development of a regular trio. This is replaced by a brief episode in major key. The most startling feature of the work appears in the Andante movement, where a soaring passage of Wagnerian bliss is left in a cadence that is unresolved in C minor. - Program notes by Elmer Booze

### Concerts at The National Gallery of Art Under the Direction of George Manos

#### December 1997

- 21 Columbia Collegiate Chorale Christmas concert James Bingham, conductor
- 28 Gottlieb Wallisch, pianist

Beethoven: Debussy:

Sonata, Opus 81a

Estambes Chopin:

Sonata No. 2

#### January 1998

4 National Gallery Orchestra George Manos, conductor

Gala Viennese New Year concert

11 The Pèlerinage Duo Jerry Wong and Shih-yu Cheng, duo-pianists

Rachmaninoff: Suite No. 2 Schubert: F Minor Fantasie Stravinsky: Sonata

Milhaud:

Scaramouche

18 Håkan Hagegård, baritone Warren Jones, pianist

Songs from Schubert:

Schwanengesang

Songs by Brahms, Sibelius, and Ravel

Throughout the month of December, highlights from the Gallery's 1996–1997 concert season can be heard on "Music from Washington," broadcast on Wednesdays at 9:00 pm on WETA, 90.9 FM.

> The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

For the convenience of concertgoers the Garden Café remains open until 6:30 pm.

## The Fifty-sixth Season of

## THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2250th Concert

# **DUNSMUIR PIANO QUARTET**

Margaret Batjer, violin Roxann Jacobson, viola Jennifer Culp, cello Justin Blasdale, piano

> Sunday Evening, December 14, 1997 at Seven O'Clock West Building, West Garden Court

> > Admission Free

#### **PROGRAM**

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Piano Trio in E Major Hob. XV/28

Allegro moderato Allegretto Finale: Allegro

Robert Helps (b. 1928)

Quartet for Piano, Violin, Viola, and Cello (1997)

Prelude Intermezzo Scherzo Postlude Coda – The Players Gossip

World Première Performance

Written for the Sergei Koussevitzky Music Foundation in the Library of Congress and Dedicated to the Memory of Sergei and Natalie Koussevitzky

# INTERMISSION

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Piano Quartet in C minor, Opus 60 (1855–1875)

Allegro non troppo Scherzo Andante Finale: Allegro comodo Formed in 1986, THE DUNSMUIR PIANO QUARTET performed its first concerts in 1987 at Oakland, California's historic Dunsmuir House, from which the ensemble derived its name. The quartet has received critical and public acclaim for its performances throughout the Pacific Coast region and for the past five years has been the recipient of California Arts Council funding for its Bay Area resident series. They can be heard on two recently released compact discs of new American works: Stephen Hartke's King of the Sun on the New World Label, and a work written for the ensemble by Thomas Sleeper on the Master Musicians' Collective label. The Dunsmuir Piano Quartet appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Lisa Sapinkopf Artists of Berkeley, California.

As a recipient of the coveted Concert Artist Guild Award, pianist JUSTIN BLASDALE made his New York debut in 1971. Mr. Blasdale's other awards include: prizes from the International Bach Competition; the International American Music Competition; the Artist Advisory Council Competition; the Joseph Lhévinne Scholarship; the Kosciuszko Foundation Chopin Scholarship; and the William Kapell Award, with a performance at Carnegie Hall. Mr. Blasdale's appearances with American orchestras include concerts with the Pittsburgh, Seattle, and San Francisco Symphony Orchestras. He performed a solo recital in the National Gallery's 1996-1997 season and is a frequent guest in chamber music at the State of Washington's Olympia Music Festival and the Sonoma Art Farm Festival in Glen Ellen, California. In 1994 Mr. Blasdale was appointed to the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

MARGARET BATJER made her solo debut at age fifteen with the Chicago Symphony. Since then she has appeared with a succession of major orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Dallas, Saint Louis, San Jose, and Seattle Symphonies. She has also performed as soloist throughout Europe with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, the Prague Chamber Orchestra, the Halle Symphony, the Flemish Chamber Orchestra, and the RTE Broadcast Orchestra in Dublin, Ireland. Ms. Batjer has performed at the Marlboro Music Festival, the Naples and Cremona Festivals in Italy, and the Salzburg Festival with Maurizio Pollini.

Completing her training at the San Francisco and New England Conservatories of Music, where she studied with Bonnie Hampton and Laurence Lesser, cellist JENNIFER CULP furthered her studies in England with Ralph Kirshbaum, William Pleeth, and the great Hungarian violinist Sandor Vegh. Ms. Culp has been a guest artist with Chamber Music West, the International Musician's Seminar

in England, the Marblehead Festival, Musica de camera de Mexico, and the Olympia Music Festival. A founding member of the Dunsmuir Piano Quartet, she frequently performs with the New York Philomusica, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Friends of Brooklyn Chamber Music, and the San Francisco Contemporary Players. Since 1986 she has been the cellist of the renowned Philadelphia String Quartet. Ms. Culp is currently on the music faculties of Holy Names College and Mills College in Oakland, California.

Violist ROXANN JACOBSON studied with Donald McInnes at the University of Washington, earning her master of music degree while a member of the Spokane String Quartet. Ms. Jacobson has been principal violist with the Vancouver, British Columbia Symphony, the Pacific Chamber Orchestra in Los Angeles, the Spokane Symphony, and acting principal with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra. In addition to being a founding member of the Dunsmuir Piano Quartet, Ms. Jacobson is principal violist with the Oakland and California Symphonies.

Published in 1797, Haydn's *Trio in E Major*, Hoboken listing XV/28, has puzzled scholars as to whether it was written during Haydn's first visit to England in 1790 or his second in 1794. The trio is unusual in that all of the movements are in the same key. The opening *Allegro moderato* is blazoned with a variety of rich modulations, a feature often found in Haydn's late piano trios. As the *Finale* commences, there is a feeling of *déjà vu* created by an atmospheric return of the first movement. Although enveloped in a leisurely triple-meter rhythm, this movement lacks the minuet-like character one might expect. However, thanks to Haydn's innate sense of humor, a surprise does surface: a fervid *minore* with a resident enharmonic excursion and a fantasia-like flourish near the end. The excursion recalls the opening movement, and the flourish the closing of the second movement, thus presenting a unified thematic cycle that complements the unity of tonality in the work.

Robert Helps' Quartet for Piano, Violin, Viola, and Cello, written this year for the Dunsmuir Piano Quartet, is his second quartet, the first having been written for strings only. About the piano quartet, Helps writes: "The quartet, [which is] in five movements, is a bit like looking at a piece of jewelry or a painting from five very different angles – getting very different perceptions, but basically just one new look each time.... A capsule description of the mood of each movement might read something like...