

CONCERTS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

Under the direction of George Manos

JUNE 1996

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| 9 | National Gallery Orchestra
George Manos, <i>conductor</i> | Butterworth: <i>A Shropshire Lad</i>
Ravel: <i>Le tombeau de Couperin</i>
Brahms: <i>Symphony No. 4</i> |
| 16 | Stephen Prutsman, <i>pianist</i> | John Harbison: <i>Sonata No. 1</i>
Ravel: <i>Miroirs</i>
Rachmaninoff: <i>Etudes tableaux</i> |
| 23 | Fritz Gearhart, <i>violinist</i>
Paul Tardif, <i>pianist</i> | Mozart: <i>Sonata in B-flat Major</i>
William Grant Still: <i>Suite for Violin and Piano</i>
Grieg: <i>Sonata in C Minor</i> |
| 30 | Enrique Graf, <i>pianist</i> | Mendelssohn: <i>Variations sérieuses</i>
Mussorgsky: <i>Pictures at an Exhibition</i> |

Concerts from the National Gallery are broadcast in their entirety at 7:00 p.m. on Sundays on radio station WGTS, 91.9 FM, four weeks after the live performance. The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

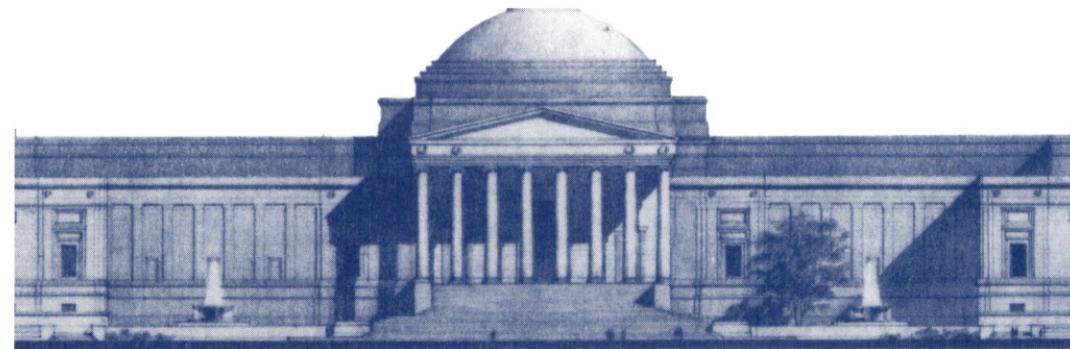
*For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:30 p.m.*

The Fifty-fourth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

at the

National Gallery of Art



2197th Concert

THE BRENTANO STRING QUARTET

MARK STEINBERG, *violin* SERENA CANIN, *violin*
MISHA AMORY, *viola* MICHAEL KANNEN, *cello*

Sunday Evening, June 2, 1996
at Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission Free

PROGRAM

Luigi Boccherini
(1743-1805)

String Quartet, Opus 32, No. 4
(c. 1782)

Allegro bizzarro
Larghetto
Allegro e con brio

Alban Berg
(1885-1935)

Lyric Suite
(1925-26)

Allegretto gioviale
Andante amoro
Allegro misterioso; Trio estatico
Adagio appassionato
Presto delirando; Tenebroso
Largo desolato

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

String Quartet in B-flat Major
Opus 130 (1825-26)

Adagio ma non troppo; allegro
Presto
Andante con moto ma non troppo
Alla danza tedesca: Allegro assai
Cavatina: Adagio molto espressivo
Finale: Allegro

The fourth movement, the climax of the entire work, starts with a sinuous figure that works its way up through the quartet. The music builds in intensity to an impassioned peak of excitement. Following this, where the music quiets, Berg carefully penned these words widely spaced apart, ‘and fading - into - the wholly, ethereal, spiritual, transcendental...’

Berg’s commentary on the fifth movement, *Presto delirando*, with its dark *Tenebroso* (gloomy) middle section, is particularly revealing: ‘This *Presto delirando* can be understood only by one who has the foreboding of the horrors and pains which are to come. Of the painful *tenebroso* of the nights, with their darkening decline into what can hardly be called sleep - and again the day with its insane, rapid heartbeat.... As though the heart would rest itself - *di nuovo tenebroso* with its heavy breathing that can barely conceal the painful unrest.’

The *Largo desolato* includes the words of Baudelaire’s sonnet, *De profundis clamavi*, from his *Fleurs du mal*.

I beg your mercy, You, the one I love,
Deep in the dark gulf where my heart now lies.
It is a gloomy world with leaden skies;
Where horror and blasphemy at night fly above.

For half a year a cold sun can be seen,
And for the rest there is darkness over all;
It is a land bleaker than the Northern Pole;
No animals, nor brooks, nor forests green!
No horror in the wide world can surpass
The vast cruelty of this sun of ice,
Of this long night of ancient Chaos;

I envy the dumbest beasts
Who in brutish sleep oblivion find,
Time creeps as the skeins of time unwind!

Berg’s placement of the words on the score reveals that the music is an actual setting of Stefan Georg’s German translation of the poem. Of added interest is the brief quotation by Berg, about halfway through the movement, of the well-known motif from the Prelude to Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*.“

Since its inception in 1992, THE BRENTANO STRING QUARTET has been singled out for its technical brilliance, musical insight, and stylistic elegance. In 1995 the quartet received two major awards, the Naumburg Chamber Music Award and the Martin E. Segal Award, and this year it surpassed even those achievements by being chosen the first string quartet to receive the newly established Cleveland Quartet Award. The latter award is intended to help the very finest young quartets to realize their potential in today's highly competitive music world, and is supported by an endowment fund created by Chamber Music America and the former members of the Cleveland Quartet. The Cleveland Quartet disbanded in 1995 after twenty-seven years as one of the world's foremost chamber ensembles.

The Brentano String Quartet is named after Antonie Brentano, who is believed in some circles to have been Beethoven's mysterious "Immortal Beloved," inasmuch as she was the object of his famous love confession. It has had several works written for it, including the *Sixth String Quartet* of Milton Babbitt and two quartets by Bruce Adolphe, which it has recorded for the CRI label. The Brentano String Quartet appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Musicians Corporate Management, Inc., of Millbrook, New York.

Violinist MARK STEINBERG holds degrees from Indiana University and the Juilliard School of Music, where he is currently on the faculty. An advocate of contemporary music, Mr. Steinberg has worked closely with composers Elliott Carter, Mario Davidovsky, and Milton Babbitt. He also performs chamber music on period instruments with the Helicon Ensemble and at the Smithsonian Institution.

SERENA CANIN earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Swarthmore College and her Master of Music degree from Juilliard, where her violin teacher was Robert Mann. An ardent chamber musician, Ms. Canin has played at the Marlboro, Bowdoin, and Taos Music Festivals and has toured with Music from Marlboro, the Brandenburg Ensemble, and Goliad Concerts.

Violist MISHA AMORY was the first prize winner of the 1991 Naumburg Viola Competition. He made his solo debut in 1985 with the Boston Symphony and has appeared with many other orchestras in the United States and Europe. Mr. Amory studied at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, at Yale, and at Juilliard, and spent a year in Berlin as a Fulbright Scholar.

Cellist MICHAEL KANNEN studied at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, at the New England Conservatory, and at Indiana University. He appears regularly with flutist Paula Robison and harpsi-

chordist Kenneth Cooper in a series of baroque music concerts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Mr. Kannen has taught at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, Massachusetts and currently teaches at the State University of New York in Purchase.

In his *Guide to Chamber Music*, Melvin Berger writes the following about Berg's *Lyric Suite*: "...The 1977 discovery of a printed score, with many of Berg's handwritten annotations, by Berg scholar George Perle gave a completely new interpretation to the work. The score, which Berg gave to his friend Hanna Fuchs-Robettin, reveals a clandestine love affair between the couple that lasted the final ten years of Berg's life, despite the fact that both were married and living with their spouses.

On an opening page, Berg wrote, 'I have secretly inserted our initials H.F. and A.B. into the music.' In German, H is the note B, and B is B-flat. With one slight change in Klein's tone row - which is, as Berg said, 'not important to the line, but is important to the character-suffering destiny' - he produces the notes A, B-flat, B, and F in the proper order. Any doubt of the composer's intent is resolved by the short sentence that Berg also inscribed into the score: 'May it be a small monument to a great love.'

The joyful opening movement, 'whose almost inconsequential mood,' Berg wrote, 'gives no hint of the tragedy to follow,' resembles the traditional sonata form. The three abrupt chords that open the movement include all the notes of the tone row. The row is then clearly heard as the first violin states the opening subject. After a short transition, the slightly slower second theme is given out by the second violin. The rising scales that follow present the concluding theme of the exposition. Then Berg skips the development and brings the subjects back in altered shape for the recapitulation.

The notation to Hanna Fuchs-Robettin at the start of the tender second movement reads, 'To you and your children I have dedicated this rondo - a musical form in which the themes (specifically your theme,) closing the charming circle, continually recur.' Hanna's lovely melody, played by the first violin, begins with a descending figure that is interrupted twice - by a slightly faster rhythmic interlude (Munzo, her son) and a slower, syncopated section (daughter Dorothea, nicknamed Dodo,) who is represented by the viola's repeated Cs or *dos*, according to Italian *solfeggio*, the singing method using *do, re, mi*, etc.

Over the third movement, Berg inserted 'May 20, 1925,' the date the lovers began their relationship. Berg explained the *misterioso* character and repressed emotion of the section by writing, 'everything was still a mystery - a mystery to us.' The agitated outbursts in the middle section, *trio estatico*, relieve the ghostly murmurings, but the original character returns, completing the movement's three-part form.