These were open at the time only to men, and singing in parts was a favorite pastime for many of their members. In an age of fervent nationalism throughout Europe, the resemblance of the men's choral experience to that of a well organized and highly motivated army did not go unnoticed. Local and regional governments not only sanctioned but even subsidized men's choruses as a way of fostering loyalty and patriotism. Even when setting texts such as the ones heard this evening, which deal with emotions and aspirations common to both men and women, composers such as Schubert and Brahms often turned to the male chorus sonority on account of its intrinsic beauty.

CONCERTS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
Under the Direction of George Manos

MARCH 1997
9 Beethoven Trio Vienna
   Christiane Karajeva, piano
   Markus Wolf, violin
   Howard Penny, cello
   Brahms: Piano Trio, Opus 8
   Gerhard Scheld: Piano Trio
   Ravel: Piano Trio
16 Corey Cerovsek, violinist
   Katya Cerovsek, pianist
   Brahms: Sonata in D Minor
   Ravel: Violin Sonata
23 Hermann Prey, baritone
   Michael Endres, pianist
   Schubert: Winterreise
30 No concert

Concerts from the National Gallery are broadcast in their entirety at 7:30 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.
PROGRAM

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Symphony No. 3 in D Major
D. 200 (1815)

Adagio maestoso
Allegretto
Menuetto: Vivace
Presto vivace

INTERMISSION

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Alto Rhapsody
Opus 53 (1869)

Schubert

Gesang der Geister über den Wassern
D. 538 (1820)

Carl Maria von Weber
(1786-1826)

Jägerchor (Hunters' Chorus)
from Der Freischütz (1817-21)

The WASHINGTON MEN'S CAMERATA was founded in 1984 to perform, promote, and preserve the rich repertoire of music for men's voices that is largely neglected in today's choral programs. Under the musical direction of Thomas Beveridge, the Camerata performs a wide variety of music, including pieces from the Renaissance and romantic periods, traditional folk songs, spirituals, and compositions from the twentieth century. The men of the Camerata have been featured in numerous concert series throughout Washington, as well as in concerts at the White House, the Kennedy Center, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Washington Cathedral.

Contralto BEVERLY BENSO is a favorite of Washington conductors and audiences as an oratorio and concert soloist. She has sung at international venues, as well, including the Salzburg Festival and Germany's Bach Tricentennial and Rheingau Festivals. A member of the National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble, she has contributed to many of the Gallery's concerts of vocal music over the past eleven years. In addition to the Vocal Arts Ensemble concerts, she has performed twice in solo recital and eight times as soloist with the National Gallery Orchestra under George Manos, presenting such works as Edward Elgar's Sea Pictures and Richard Bales' A Set of Jade.

Franz Schubert had just turned eighteen when he began working on his third symphony in the spring of 1815. Having already written a symphony and a mass, he was no stranger to the larger musical forms, and his craft had been finely honed by the completion in 1814 of an opera and four string quartets. This prolific young man must have had manuscript and pen in hand every day of the year in 1815, for in the course of that year he wrote not only the symphony we hear this evening, but also his Second Symphony, two masses, four works for the stage, a string quartet, two sonatas, and at least 145 songs! These statistics are all the more remarkable in the light of the fact that at the time Schubert was obliged to make ends meet by teaching full-time in a grammar school.

Brahms' Alto Rhapsody has as its text three verses from Goethe's Harzreise im Winter (A Winter's Journey in the Harz Mountains.) Brahms was attracted to these somber poems on the subject of solitude during a period of depression following an unhappy love affair. During the first two stanzas, when the solo voice is accompanied by the orchestra only, the mood is all darkness and despair, but as the choir enters to accompany the third stanza, the mood changes and an element of radiant hope can be heard.

The phenomenon of music written expressly for male choruses and their special sonority began with the advent of opera, when plots would frequently give rise to situations in which the men of an opera chorus would present themselves as a group of knights, soldiers, hunters, etc. The deeper sonority of men's voices was used by opera composers to provide tonal contrast with women's choruses, with soloists, and with the full ensemble. In the case of Weber's Der Freischütz, the Hunters' Chorus follows immediately after the audience has heard a similar chorus from a group of maidens. The eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries also saw a burgeoning of guilds, student organizations, hunting lodges, and other special interest clubs.