

work, I evoke birds lost in the torpor of a very somber forest, during the hottest hours of summertime." A repeated B-flat followed by an arabesque, suggested to Ravel by a blackbird's song, gives the piece its sustaining logic. Ravel's *Tzigane (Gypsy)*, an exotic and rhapsodic composition for violin, can trace its influence through Paganini and Liszt. A bravura adaptation of the Hungarian rhapsody, *Tzigane* presents extraordinary technical challenges for the violinist. The violin part brims with rapid harmonics and pizzicati, quadruple stops, and brilliant passages in perpetual motion. The many subtle changes in tempo, the rhythmic figures, the straightforward harmony, and the frequent use of a four-note Gypsy motive (E, F, G#, A) give *Tzigane* an authentic folk flavor. However, the clarity of Ravel's workmanship raises the work to the sublime level of art music.

-Program Notes by Elmer Booze

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.

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

February 1998

22 Talich String Quartet
Beethoven: *Quartet, Opus 131*
Mozart: *Quartet in D Major*
Janáček: *String Quartet #1*

March 1998

1 National Gallery Orchestra
George Manos, *conductor*
Delius: *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*
Dvorák: *Scherzo capriccioso*
Schumann: *Symphony No. 1*
8 Christian Tetzlaff, *violinist*
J. S. Bach: *Partita No. 2*
Sonata No. 3
Partita No. 3

15 Paul Badura-Skoda, *pianist*
Mozart: *C Minor Fantasy*
Beethoven: *"Waldstein" Sonata*
Chopin: *24 Preludes*

22 Mark Kosower, *cellist*
Jee-Won Oh, *pianist*
Brahms: *D Minor Sonata*
Francoeur: *Sonata in E Major*
Schumann: *Fantasy Pieces*

29 Jeffrey Multer, *violinist*
James Tocco, *pianist*
Corigliano: *Sonata for Violin and Piano*
Schumann: *Sonata in D Minor*
Mozart: *Sonata, K. 481*

April 1998

5 National Gallery Orchestra
George Manos, *conductor*
Jason Stearns, *baritone*
Chabrier: *Suite pastorale*
Debussy: *Trois ballades de François Villon*
Saint-Saëns: *Symphony No. 2*

12 No Concert

The Fifty-sixth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2259th Concert

KOLJA BLACHER, violinist

JESSICA KRASH, pianist

Sunday Evening, February 15, 1998
at Seven O'Clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission Free

PROGRAM

Robert Schumann
(1810–1856) Sonata for Violin and Piano
in A Minor, Op. 105
(1851)

Mit leidenschaftlichem Ausdruck
Allegro
Lebhaft

Sergei Prokofiev
(1891–1953) Sonata No. 1, in F Minor, Op. 80
(1938–1946)

Andante assai
Allegro brusco
Andante
Allegrissimo

INTERMISSION

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897) Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Major
Opus 100 (1886)

Allegro amabile
Andante tranquillo; vivace
Allegretto grazioso (quasi andante)

Maurice Ravel
(1875–1937) Oiseaux Tristes
from "Miroirs" (1904–1905)

Ravel Tzigane (1924)

Born in Berlin in 1963, KOLJA BLACHER studied at the Juilliard School of Music with Dorothy DeLay, Rami Shevelov, and Sandor Vegh. Mr. Blacher's extensive concert tours have taken him to Europe, Japan, North America, South America, and Israel. He has performed with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig, the Dresden and Munich Philharmonic Orchestras, and the Radio Symphony Orchestras of Hamburg, Frankfurt, Leipzig, and Berlin. He has worked with such renowned conductors as Claudio Abbado, Lorin Maazel, and Dennis Russel Davies. Mr. Blacher's repertoire includes more than forty concerti with a strong emphasis on twentieth-century music. He gave the world premiere of Frank Michael Beyer's violin concerto, *Musik der Frühe*, at the Berliner Festwochen. In addition, he has performed the violin concertos of Lutoslawski, Hindemith, and Alban Berg. In 1993 Kolja Blacher was appointed concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. His recording of Boris Blacher's *Violin Concerto* was awarded the *Diapason d'or* in October 1994.

JESSICA KRASH, a native Washingtonian, studied piano with Patricia Zander, Nadia Reisenberg, and Ylda Novik; composition with Earl Kim and Lawrence Moss; and chamber music with Joel Krosnick, Sandor Vegh, and Leon Kirchner. Ms. Krash graduated with high honors from the University of Maryland with a doctorate in composition, and obtained a master's degree in piano from the Juilliard School of Music. She has played chamber music with many string players, including Ian Swensen, Eva Gruesser, and Elizabeth Anderson. Ms. Krash has received grants from Meet the Composer, the Maryland State Arts Council, and the Arts Council of Montgomery County, and fellowships from the Center for the Creative Arts and the University of Maryland. She is a member of the music faculty at George Washington University. Mr. Blacher and Ms. Krash appear at the National Gallery by arrangement with Impresariat Sonia Simmenauer of Hamburg, Germany.

Schumann's first violin sonata is the more popular of the two sonatas he completed in this genre. Both were written in 1851 and are elongated fantasies, whose scores include some of the most complex and difficult piano writing from Schumann's pen. The opening movement is constructed in sonata form, but is essentially monothematic, with the second subject existing in a harmonic rather than melodic proportion. Of particular interest is the fact that the sharply-honed development section derives its propulsion from the rhythmic drive of the first subject. This movement is compact, leaving no room for illusory excursions, which are saved for the later

movements. Its rarefied conciseness, unusual even for Schumann, qualifies it for consideration as a miniature masterpiece. The second movement takes on a more conciliatory spirit, contrasting sharply with that of the first movement, and more akin to the simplistic, childlike spirit of Schumann's *Kinderszenen*. The finale, utilizing once again the sonata form, incorporates the perpetual motion technique, with the help of the sixteenth-note figure found in the first movement. The coda, likewise, is ushered in with a cyclic reference to the opening movement.

Prokofiev's first violin sonata was given its first American performance in San Francisco in 1948 by the renowned violinist, Joseph Szigeti. Its key (F Minor) is associated in musical tradition with sombre hues and pathos, making it apropos to the spirit of the first movement. The eminent *New York Times* music critic, Olin Downes, reviewing the work, stated: "We find this *Sonata* a beauty, from beginning to end; original in every movement, fresh and melodic, approaching at times the folk-style in its invention, full of musical ideas and imagination, and often uncommon scoring for the two instruments."

Brahms composed his second violin sonata in 1886 while on holiday in Thun, Switzerland. It is referred to as the "*Meistersinger*" *Sonata* because of the similarity of its first subject to the beginning of Walther von Stolzing's prize song in Wagner's opera, *Die Meistersinger*. The subject appears twice in the piano part before it is picked up by violin. The second subject, a quote by Brahms of one of his own songs (*Wie Melodien zieht es*), also appears first in the piano, followed by the violin. The second movement (*Andante tranquillo; vivace*) fuses together a lyrical section and a *scherzo*, which has slow and animated sections alternating three times. After the violin ushers in a *cantabile* melody, the piano repeats it and then yields to the violin for a dancelike *vivace* in D Minor. The movement settles ultimately into the original key of F Major and ends with the returning *cantabile* theme and the *vivace* in abbreviated form.

The finale (*Allegretto grazioso, quasi andante*) opens with a spacious and unrestrained melody that is introduced by the violin. The secondary segments are a contemplative violin melody opposing the piano's arpeggiated figures, and an episode in F minor that is brisk and almost delirious. As the movement ends, a muscular coda rises to an impassioned climax, which closes the work.

Oiseaux tristes is the second part of *Miroirs*, a set of five impressionistic virtuoso pieces for the piano. Ravel comments: "In this