Contralto Beverly Benso is a uniquely gifted singer in her range. Prior to her 1990 debut at Carnegie Hall, Ms. Benso had already established an international reputation through her performances in the Bach Tricentennial in Leipzig, the 1989 Salzburg and Rheingau Festivals, and the 1986 Mahler Festival in Canada.

Tenor Samuel Gordon is professor of music at the University of Akron, Ohio. He is an award-winning conductor and composer as well as a singer. A number of Dr. Gordon’s original compositions and arrangements of American spirituals are in the quartet’s standing repertoire.

Baritone Robert Kennedy is also much in demand as a soloist, both as a recitalist and for his interpretations of opera and oratorio roles. He has been heard as Colas in the National Gallery’s concert production of Mozart’s Bastien und Bastienne, which was presented in the context of the 1991 Washington Mozart Festival, and more recently in the role of Herr Schlendrian in Bach’s Coffee Cantata.

Pianist Francis Conlon is one of the most sought-after ensemble musicians in the greater Washington area, and he is on stage virtually every week of the year. His numerous concert tours have included Canada, Mexico, Europe, and Japan. He has been a winner of the National Society of Arts and Letters Competition and the Jordan Awards Contest here in Washington, as well as the Brewster-Allison Competition in Austin, Texas. A member of the music faculty at George Washington University, Conlon is the director of music at the Church of the Annunciation in Washington and Temple Rodef Shalom in Falls Church, Virginia.

National Gallery music director George Manos founded the National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble in the first year of his tenure, recognizing the potential and appropriateness of such a resident ensemble as part of the Gallery’s offering to the public. Since then, he has also founded the National Gallery Chamber Players String Quartet and the National Gallery Chamber Players Wind Quintet. In addition to artistic direction of these groups and direction of the National Gallery Orchestra, Manos has introduced innovations to the Gallery’s American Music Festival in the form of jazz, bluegrass, and gospel concerts.
PROGRAM

1. Francis Pilkington (1562–1638) Four Madrigals
   Now Let Her Change
   Rest, Sweet Nymphs
   Climb, O Heart
   The Messenger of the Delightful Spring

2. John Eccles (c. 1668–1735) Ah, How Lovely
   (Tenor and soprano)

   (Soprano and contralto)
   If I My Celia
   (Tenor and baritone)

4. Morton Lauridsen (b. 1945) Mid-winter Songs
   (1980)
   Mid-winter Waking
   She Tells Her Love
   Intercession in Late October
   Like Snow

INTERMISSION

5. Allen Trubitt (b. 1931) Three Songs on the Shortness of Life
   Injurious Hours
   Life Is a Poet’s Fable
   Our Hasty Life

6. (Arr. Phil Mattson) Londonderry Air
   (Arr. André Ellefeuille) The Last Rose of Summer
   (Arr. Margaret Vance) What Love Can Do
   (Arr. Maurice Gardner) Every Night, When the Sun Goes Down
   (Arr. David Düsing) Frog Went a’Courtin’

The National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble was founded in 1986 as a resident ensemble of the National Gallery of Art by the Gallery’s music director, George Manos. Since then the ensemble has appeared at the National Gallery twenty-one times and presented numerous concerts in other venues, including the Louvre Museum in Paris, Germany’s Rheingau Festival, and the 1989 Salzburg Festival. From each of its six concert tours of Europe the ensemble has brought home rave reviews, as well as first prize from the 1988 “Music at Saint Donat’s” Festival in the former Yugoslavia. The ensemble has presented vocal music as an enhancement to a number of exhibitions at the Gallery, including The Glory of Venice: Art in the Eighteenth Century and The Touch of the Artist: Master Drawings from the Woodner Collections.

The quartet's soprano, Rosa Lamoreaux, is well known to Washington audiences through her many appearances at the Smithsonian Concert Series, the Kennedy Center, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and the National Gallery. In November of 1998, she was the soprano soloist for the world premiere performance at the Library of Congress of Herman Berlinski’s cantata, Maskir Neshamo (In Remembrance of a Soul).