moods. In a letter to Clara Schumann, Brahms explained: “Every bar and every note must sound as if played ritardando, as though one were luxuriating and enjoying the dissonances.” The second intermezzo, marked *Andantino un poco agitato*, is much livelier than the first, giving evidence of Brahms’ homage to Johann Strauss, whom he met and befriended at a summer retreat in Bad Ischl, Austria. A waltz à la Strauss in the middle brings tranquility to an otherwise agitated mood. The third intermezzo, marked *Grassioso e giocoso*, with its lightheartedness and dancelike spirit, is reminiscent of Schubert, despite its Brahmsian rhythmic complexities. The *Rhapsody in E-flat Major* calls to mind the young Brahms, with its passion, boldness, and youthful vigor. It is, as stated by the late and much revered pianist Walter Gieseking, “cast in a heroic mold.” There are three contrasting themes that are appended with a brilliant coda in the key of E minor.

Completed on September 26, 1828, just a few weeks before Schubert’s death, the *Sonata in B-flat Major, Op. 960 (Opus posthumous)* is his last important work in this genre. It is considered by most music scholars to be a transcendent work of great individuality. The first movement, marked *Molto moderato* and forty-four measures in length, is one of the most sedate and elongated sonata beginnings Schubert ever wrote. The opening theme is accompanied by muted harmonies that are sober and dignified. The second theme is more melodious and delicate, and the development section changes the mood altogether, becoming bright and cheerful. The second movement, with its unorthodox key of C-sharp minor (far from the sonata’s original key of B-flat major) is, in the opinion of many pianists, the most exquisite slow movement ever penned by Schubert. The third movement, a *scherzo*, is a complete divergence from the earlier movements. As recognized and stated by the renowned American pianist, Leon Fleisher: “Schubert could not remain gloomy forever, even on his deathbed.” A gay, dancing, and sometimes humorous spirit prevails here, with the delicacy called for in the movement’s tempo marking *(Allegro vivace con delicatezza)*. The finale *(Allegro, ma non troppo)* demonstrates Schubert’s complete mastery of the rondo form. It is filled with a disposition that is effervescent in character, with a brief *Presto* passage that brilliantly closes the sonata.
PROGRAM

Maurice Ravel
(1875–1937)
Valses nobles et sentimentales
(1912)

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)
Vier Klavierstücke, Op. 119
(1892)

- Intermezzo in B Minor
- Intermezzo in E Minor
- Intermezzo in C Major
- Rhapsody

INTERMISSION

Franz Schubert
(1797–1828)
Sonata in B-flat Major
D. 960 (Op. Posth.)
(1828)

Molto moderato
Andante sostenuto
Scherzo: Allegro vivace con delicatezza
Allegro, ma non troppo

Pianist Jon Klibonoff, who last appeared at the National Gallery in 1987 as pianist of the Bowdoin Trio, won first prize in the Concert Artists Guild Competition in 1984. Since then, he has garnered additional awards and accolades and has established a career as orchestra soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician throughout the United States and abroad. His most recent chamber music collaborations have been with flutist Carol Wincenc, clarinetist David Shifrin, and cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Reviewing one of Klibonoff’s recitals, a Boston Globe critic wrote: “Mastery of touch, color, dynamics, and style [were] aplenty, [with] a first-class interpretive intelligence.... There are concerts and concerts, but this seemed a privileged encounter.” With his newly formed trio, Bachmann-Klibonoff-Fridman (violin, piano, and cello, respectively), Klibonoff has begun a new adventure in chamber music performances in New York City. Besides being trio-in-residence at WQXR-FM for three seasons, the trio was featured in 1997 in a special series, presenting the complete piano chamber music of Johannes Brahms at the Kosciuszko Foundation.

Jon Klibonoff has recorded two CDs, Fratres and Kiss on Wood, with Maria Bachmann for Catalyst, the contemporary music label of BMG Classics. He is also featured on a newly released Channel Classics recording, Anxiety of Influence, in which the Meridian Arts Ensemble performs works by Frank Zappa, Stephen Barber, and others. His recording of a cabaret album in collaboration with baritone Douglas Webster was released by Channel Classics in 1997. Holding degrees from the Juilliard School of Music, where he studied piano with Martin Canin, and the Manhattan School of Music, where his teacher was Donn-Alexandre Feder, Klibonoff is a member of the piano faculty of Hunter College. He appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Concert Artists Guild of New York.

Ravel’s Valses nobles et sentimentales is a chain of waltzes, a musical form that originated with Schubert’s Twelve Waltzes, Opus 18 and was revisited by various composers throughout the romantic period. In a marginal notation, Ravel placed a quotation from Henri de Régnier: “the constantly new and delicious pleasure of a useless occupation.” There are seven waltzes and an epilogue, in which previous material is quoted.

The Vier Klavierstücke, Opus 119, composed when Brahms was sixty years old, turned out to be his last group of piano pieces. The set begins with an intermezzo in B minor, marked Adagio, that shows Brahms in one of his most sensitive and melancholy