

have been begun earlier and finished after he moved to Leipzig. All slight chronological questions aside, the sonatas give ample evidence of having been conceived as a single, unified set.

The *Italian Concerto* reveals yet another brilliant facet of Bach's compositional output. While he was in the employ of the Duke of Weimar (1708–1717), he had access to a number of scores of concertos by Vivaldi that enjoyed widespread popularity throughout Europe. The experience was a seminal one for Bach, since he was to incorporate features of the concerto form into many genres of his own music. The immediate result of the contact, however, was a series of keyboard transcriptions of concerti by Vivaldi, Benedetto Marcello, Georg Philip Telemann, and the son of his patron, Prince Johann Ernst of Weimar. Bach's original composition in the form of an Italian concerto for solo harpsichord came some years later (1735), but draws on the experience he had gained from those transcriptions.

Bach's first major biographer, Johann Nicolaus Forkel, quotes Carl Philip Emanuel Bach as saying that his father "played the violin cleanly and penetratingly, thus keeping the orchestra in better order than he could have done from the harpsichord. He understood perfectly the possibilities of all stringed instruments. This is evidenced by his unaccompanied solos for the violin and the violoncello. One of the greatest violinists once told me that he had seen nothing more perfect for learning to be a good violinist . . . than the said violin solos without bass." The *Sonata in A Minor, BWV 1014* follows the classic Italian *sonata da chiesa* succession of movements, slow-fast-slow-fast. Numerous chords and double stops highlight the continuous counterpoint of the work, in which Bach and the performer work together to create in the listener's mind a complete polyphonic composition of the highest order.

Program notes by Kenneth Slowik

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.

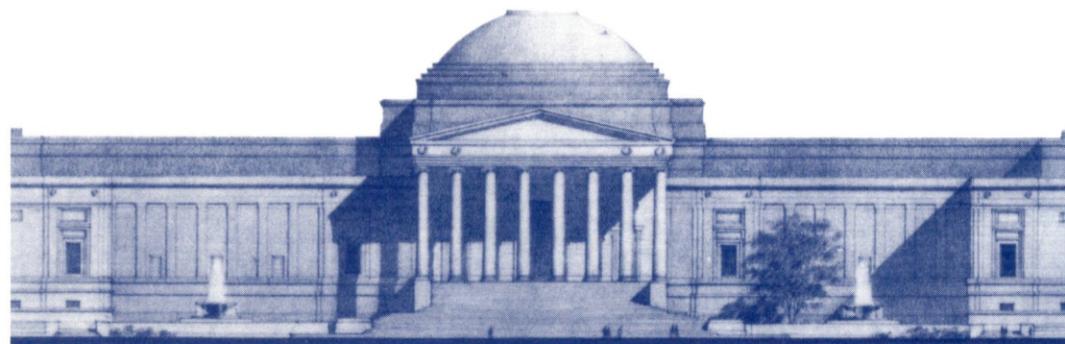
Selections from concerts at the Gallery can be heard on WGMS-FM, 103.5, on the second Sunday of each month at 9:00 p.m.

During the months of January, February, and March, recent performances by the National Gallery Orchestra can be heard on WETA-FM, 90.9, on Wednesdays at 9:00 p.m.

The Fifty-eighth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2333d Concert

MARILYN McDONALD, *violinist*

KENNETH SLOWIK, *harpsichordist*

Sunday Evening, 23 January 2000
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

PROGRAM

Music of Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

Sonata in C Minor, BWV 1017

Siciliano
Allegro
Adagio
Allegro

Sonata in A Minor, BWV 1003

Grave
Fuga
Andante
Allegro

INTERMISSION

Italian Concerto in F Major, BWV 971

Adagio
Fuga
Siciliano
Presto

Sonata in A Major, BWV 1014

Adagio
Allegro
Andante
Allegro

Violinist **Marilyn McDonald** has toured worldwide as a member of the Castle Trio, the Smithsonian String Quartet, the Oberlin Baroque Ensemble, and Ensemble Pierrot, a group specializing in contemporary music. She has appeared as soloist with the Milwaukee and Omaha Symphonies, and has played recitals at the Caramoor Festival, Yale University, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alice Tully Hall, the Library of Congress, the Mostly Mozart Festival, and the renowned Utrecht Early Music Festival in Holland. In addition to a visiting professorship at the Eastman School of Music, she holds faculty positions at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, the Oberlin Baroque Performance Institute, and the Colorado College Summer Conservatory and Festival. She is concertmaster of the Peninsula Music Festival Orchestra. McDonald has recorded for Vox, the Smithsonian Collection of Recordings, Gasparo, Decca, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, and Virgin Classics.

Harpichordist **Kenneth Slowik** is artistic director of the period instrument chamber music program at the National Museum of American History. As a cellist and viola da gamba player, he was a founding member of the Smithsonian Chamber Players, the Axelrod Quartet, the Smithsonian String Quartet, the Smithsonian Chamber Orchestra, and the Castle Trio. A frequent performer with Anner Bylisma's Ensemble l'Archibudelli and at festivals throughout Europe, Canada, and the United States, Slowik is increasingly in demand as a conductor of opera and oratorio. His solo, conducting, and ensemble appearances have led to more than fifty recordings, many of them prize winners. His repertoire includes works from Monteverdi and Bach to Schoenberg and Richard Strauss. Slowik's liner notes accompany over half of his recordings and have been critically praised. Currently a member of the University of Maryland faculty, Slowik is, in addition, artistic director of the Baroque Performance Institute at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music and conductor of the Santa Fe, New Mexico, Bach Festival.

In company with thousands of other events planned for the year 2000, this evening's concert celebrates the 250th anniversary of the death of Johann Sebastian Bach, conductor, organist, instrument inventor, practical acoustician, harpichordist, and string player extraordinaire. The program choices reflect his excellence in the two latter categories, and include two solo works and two duos. As one might expect, each work stands as one of the greatest examples of its type.

The distinguished Bach scholar Robert Marshall has offered the following assessment of the importance of Bach's activities in these fields: "With the sonatas and partitas for unaccompanied violin and the suites for unaccompanied cello, Bach was not only the first composer in history to cultivate the genre extensively, [but] he also exhausted it for all time. With his sonatas for melody instrument and harpichord, especially the six for violin, he virtually created, made viable, and brought to its first perfection the form of the modern duo sonata." The two duo-sonatas included in this program belong to a set of six that is traditionally assigned to Bach's years as the court *Kapellmeister* in Cöthen (1717-1723). They may in fact