

and luminous work to a close. Strong without heaviness, expressive without affectation, [this] trio is one of the most beautiful productions of French Art."

Tchaikovsky wrote his *Piano Trio in A Minor, Op. 50*, to pay tribute to his friend, the great Russian pianist Nicholas Rubinstein (1835–1881), who was the founder and director of the Moscow Conservatory. In two lengthy movements, Tchaikovsky unleashes a flood of emotions. *Pezzo elegiaco: Moderato assai* is cast in sonata-allegro form with three contrasting themes, as opposed to the usual two. The cello states the opening theme, full of fervor and pensiveness, after which a bridgelike second theme that is livelier and more extroverted is stated by the piano. There follows a deliciously bittersweet string duet between the violin and the cello, one of Tchaikovsky's most lyrical outpourings. The recapitulation recalls the first and second themes in the major mode, followed by a return to the minor mode via a heavyhearted string duet. The movement closes with a recall of the opening theme by the piano in a distended configuration.

The trio's second movement (*A: Tema con variazioni: Andante con moto; B: Variazione finale e coda: Allegro risoluto e con fuoco*) uses a theme that carries a folk song flavor (Rubinstein was said to be fond of folk music). From this theme, Tchaikovsky constructs a series of variations that are not only ingenious but emotional as well. Most notable among them are the third (*Allegro moderato*), the sixth (*Tempo di valse*), and the tenth (*Tempo di mazurka*). The ninth variation carries a rare tempo indication, *Andante flessibile, ma non tanto*, hinting that Tchaikovsky may have been frustrated with performers who carried expressiveness to an extreme. After the main theme makes an emotional appearance in the form of an epilogue, Tchaikovsky closes the trio with a tranquil *marche funèbre* as a final gesture of reverence for his late departed friend and teacher.

Program notes by Elmer Booze

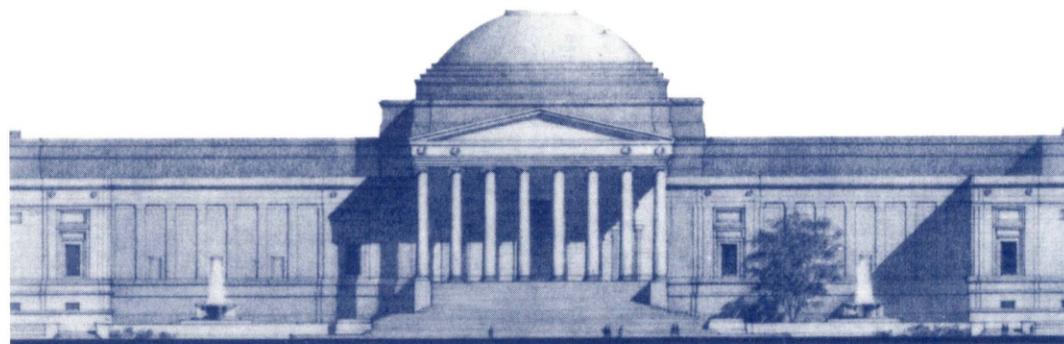
The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

For the convenience of concertgoers the Garden Café remains open until 6:30 p.m.

The Fifty-eighth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2340th Concert

PARIS PIANO TRIO

REGIS PASQUIER, *violin* ROLAND PIDOUX, *cello*

JEAN-CLAUDE PENNETIER, *piano*

Sunday Evening, 12 March 2000
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

PROGRAM

Gabriel Fauré
(1845–1924) Piano Trio in D Minor
Op. 120 (1922–1923)

Allegro ma non troppo
Andantino
Finale

Maurice Ravel
(1875–1937) Piano Trio in A Minor
(1914)

Modéré
Pantoum: Assez vif
Passacaille: Très large
Final: Animé

INTERMISSION

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840–1893) Trio in A Minor
Op. 50 (1882)

1. Pezzo elegiaco: Moderato assai
- 2A. Tema con variazioni: Andante con moto
- 2B. Variazione finale e coda: Allegro risoluto e con fuoco

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

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

When the members of the **Paris Piano Trio** formed their ensemble, they were students at the National Conservatory of Music in Paris. All three graduated with top honors and are now professors at the same institution. At the peak of their individual careers as solo performers, they are making an increased commitment to the Trio, enjoying the opportunity to express simultaneously their musical individuality and combined musical rapport. The Trio has repeatedly toured in France, England, Canada, and the United States. Recordings of the ensemble include the trios of Schubert and Brahms, in addition to the chamber music of Ernest Chausson (1855–1899) on the Harmonia Mundi label, under the name by which the Trio is known in Europe, “Les Musiciens.” The Paris Piano Trio appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Melvin Kaplan, Inc., of Burlington, Vermont.

Fauré’s *Piano Trio in D Minor, Op. 120*, was composed at the suggestion of his editor, Jacques Durand (1865–1928), son of the founder of the music publishing firm Durand & Cie. It was first performed in Paris in May of 1923. Musicians and lovers of Fauré’s music are in agreement that its magic resides in the luminous, elusive beauty with which the musical structures, melody, harmony, and counterpoint interact. The first movement (*Allegro ma non troppo*) is in classical sonata form, with two developments and a coda that affirms the overall mood of serenity. The second movement (*Andantino*) is set in A-B-A form, with a first theme that is one of the most poetic and moving in the piano trio literature. The second theme is centered around a ghostly and evanescent syncopated melody that is carried by the piano. A brief, rapid, and virtuosic *Finale*, cast in the form of a rondo with the dancing lilt of a scherzo, brings this charming work to a lively and brilliant conclusion.

Maurice Ravel was thirty-nine years old when he wrote what is now considered his supreme chamber music masterpiece, the *Trio for Piano, Violin, and Cello in A Minor*. The opening movement (*Modéré*) exploits an unusual rendition of common time (4/4). Ravel doubles the time signature to 8/8 and divides the measure into 3+3+2, resulting in a pleasurable oscillation. The second movement (*Pantoum: Assez vif*) invokes the texture of the *pantum*, a Malayan verse form that is traditionally accompanied by strumming guitars. The third movement (*Passacaille: Très large*) contains one of Ravel’s most inspired themes, as beautiful as it is fascinating. The piano dominates the last movement (*Finale: Animé*), carrying a message, according to music critic Edward Cole, “[that] the interpreter entrusted with this part must always play frankly, in the spirit of a solo performer [who brings] this pure