accompaniment." Imperfections in construction and style can be expected from a young person's initial attempt at composition. On the other hand, even as a jeweler finds gems among raw stones, the members of the National Gallery Chamber Players String Quartet have found three nearly perfect and polished "gems" from the young Rossini's collection. The outer movements, taken from the first sonata, are lively and charming, while the inner movement, from the second sonata, has a lyrical melody that is hauntingly beautiful. Taken together, the three movements afford a satisfying sample from the great Italian opera composer's youthful precocity.

Bartók was twenty-seven years old when he composed his first major chamber work, the *String Quartet No. 1 in A Minor*, Op. 7. Subsequent generations of performers and musicologists have agreed that it is a masterpiece. The string quartets of Bartók and Beethoven have often been compared and were found to have striking similarities. For example, each quartet represents a particular creative period in the composer's life. Both composers wrote quartets over the entire span of their lives, and the quartets became the vehicle for the composers' deepest and most personal thoughts and feelings, a distillation of their art in its purest terms. The opening movement (*Lento*) of the *A Minor Quartet* begins with a fugue, at the end of which the tempo quickens, connecting it to the second movement, a quasi *scherzo-intermezzo* (*Allegretto*). Although the first and second movements contain touches that mimic Brahms and Wagner, the highly animated third movement (*Introduzione: Allegro vivace*) incorporates vigorous Hungarian dance rhythms and veiled folk songs, Bartók's special gift to the medium.

Like Bartók's *Op. 7, No. 1*, Mendelssohn's *Quartet No. 2 in A Minor*, Op. 13, is his first work in this genre. In the first movement (*Adagio; allegro vivace*), Mendelssohn borrows a three-note motive from the song, *Frage* (*Question*), from his *Twelve Songs*, Op. 9, which forms the kernel of the first theme. A fugal subject is the second theme. A *cavatina*, reminiscent of a theme in Beethoven's *String Quartet*, Op. 130, is employed in the second movement (*Adagio non lento*) with a short *recitativo*. The third movement (*Intermezzo: Allegro vivace di molto*) has a refined and elegant melody over a pizzicato accompaniment played by the violins, with a *scherzo* middle section that reminds the listener of Mendelssohn's gift for expressing the entertaining world of the make-believe. The fourth movement (*Presto; adagio non lento*) is markedly majestic. Whereas the flavor of *Frage* is present to some extent in each of the previous movements, this movement utilizes the entire second half of the song, including a lengthy *recitativo*. This material is woven into the framework of the sonata form, bringing the entire work to a splendid conclusion.

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.*
PROGRAM

Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)  Selections from String Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2  Arranged for String Quartet (1804)

Moderato (from String Sonata No. 1)
Andantino (from String Sonata No. 2)
Allegro (from String Sonata No. 1)

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)  String Quartet No. 1, Op. 7 (1908)

Lento
Allegretto; adagio
Introduzione: (Allegro); allegro vivace

INTERMISSION

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)  String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor, Op. 13 (1827)

Adagio; allegro vivace
Adagio non lento
Intermezzo; Allegretto con moto; allegro di molto
Presto; adagio non lento

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

Composed of members of the National Gallery Orchestra, the National Gallery Chamber Players String Quartet appears as a regular feature of each season of concerts at the Gallery. Under the guidance of Gallery music director George Manos, the quartet has acquired a splendid ensemble reputation since its debut performance in 1995. In addition to performing the standard quartet literature, the National Gallery Chamber Players String Quartet surveys and performs rarely heard masterpieces of chamber music.

A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, violinist Claudia Chudacoff has among her credits several solo appearances with the National Gallery Orchestra under George Manos, including a recent performance of Brahms' Concerto for Violin, Cello, and Orchestra. Other guest orchestral appearances have been with the Toledo Symphony, the Louisville Ballet, and the Ann Arbor Symphony. She has been first violinist of the National Gallery Chamber Players String Quartet since its inception.

Violinist Margaret Soper Gutierrez has won top prizes in both the Des Moines and the Cedar Falls/Waterloo Symphony Youth Artists Competitions. An active chamber and orchestral musician, she performs regularly with the Washington Chamber Symphony and the Washington Bach Consort and as a substitute violinist with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. She is currently enjoying a one-year appointment as a full-time violinist with the National Symphony Orchestra.

Violist Eric deWaardt, a native of Delft, Holland, studied the viola with Ramon Scavelli, William Lincer, and the Cleveland Quartet’s Atar Arad. He has performed as principal violist with the Spoleto Festival Orchestra, the Heidelberg Festival Orchestra, and the Columbus, Ohio, Symphony Orchestra. An active recitalist and chamber musician, he has presented recitals in Holland and in many Washington venues, including The Jewish Community Center of Rockville, Maryland, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Embassy of The Netherlands.

Cellist Diana Fish came to Washington in 1994 as a member of the Marine Band’s White House Chamber Orchestra. She graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music as a student of Orlando Cole and undertook graduate studies at Indiana University, where her teacher was Janos Starker. A founding member of the Whitney Trio, she has performed throughout the United States, including chamber music concerts at the National Gallery and the Phillips Collection.

Rossini’s Six Sonatas for Strings, which he wrote at the very young age of twelve, were believed to be lost until they were rediscovered in the collections of the Library of Congress after World War II. The sonatas are not of the same caliber as chamber works written by Mozart at the same age, but they show remarkable musical skill and insight. While Mozart’s father tutored him at an early age, Rossini’s parents, who were also professional musicians, made no attempt to train their son. Rossini himself demurred on the subject of these sonatas, saying: “These works were composed when I was still a complete child, and before I had even once received lessons in