

Hailed as one of the finest American pianists of his generation, **Stephen Prutsman** is active as an orchestral soloist, recitalist, chamber musician, composer, and conductor. An Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient and medalist at the Tchaikovsky and Queen Elisabeth of Belgium International Competitions, Prutsman has performed with many of the world's foremost orchestras, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Baltimore Symphony, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the Belgian National Orchestra, the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra, and the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra. He is the co-founder and director of the International Chamber Music Festival in El Paso, Texas.

As Barber was composing his *Souvenirs for Piano, Four Hands, Op. 28*, with the duo piano team of Gold and Fizdale in mind, he was invited by Lincoln Kirstein to orchestrate the work for a ballet. The invitation resulted in a commission, but the version for piano, four hands was performed several times in public before the ballet reached the stage in 1955. About the *Souvenirs*, Barber wrote: "One might imagine a divertissement in a setting reminiscent of the Palm Court of the Hotel Plaza in New York, the year about 1914, [the] epoch of the first tangos; *Souvenirs* remembered with affection, not in irony or with the tongue in cheek, but in amused tenderness."

Brahms was inspired to compose his *Trio in A Minor, Op. 114*, after being enamored with the playing of the virtuoso clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld (1856–1907), whom he heard performing concertos of Carl Maria von Weber and Mozart. There is an unusual feature found in this particular trio: the use of a dark tonal color that can best be described as mahogany-colored. It is heard in the first movement of the trio and is seldom encountered in Brahms' chamber works, with the exception of a tinge of darkness in his *Clarinet Quintet, Op. 115*.

Stravinsky arranged the *Petite Suite for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano* from his *Histoire du soldat (A Soldier's Tale)*, a ballet score for narrator and seven instruments written in 1918. In its original setting, the work is to be read, played, and danced. It is a tribute to Stravinsky's genius that the work remains interesting even when stripped of the narrative, the dancing, and the sound of the bassoon, cornet, trombone, double bass, and percussion.

Mendelssohn's *Piano Trio No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 66*, represents his final effort in this genre. It is a work of enormous ardency. The first movement (*Allegro energico e con fuoco*), set in sonata-allegro form, opens with its first theme placed in the dark harmony of C minor. This tempestuous and enigmatic melody gives way to a more lyrical second theme, offering a balmy relief that is destined not to last. The return of the first theme in the recapitulation becomes fractured through its harmonic breakdown and produces one of Mendelssohn's most mournful musical expressions. The second movement (*Andante espressivo*), in the key of E-flat major, is full of heartfelt passion. Enclosed in a tripartite (ABA) song form, its scaling passion, as expressed by writer David W. Moore, "...is not unworthy of Brahms. The effect of the melody is that of timeless beauty." The third movement (*Scherzo*) is a bejeweled fairytale of crackling brilliance that is not unlike the mood and spirit of the *Scherzo* movement from Mendelssohn's incidental music to *A Mid-Summer's Night Dream*. Returning to the key of C minor, the last movement (*Finale*) has an opening theme that enters on the vaulted ninth. This animated first theme gives way to a more sedate second theme that is summery, but ephemeral. The main theme returns with the vaulted ninth, followed by the chorale tune, *Vor deinen Thron tret ich (Before Thy Throne I Come)*, used by Bach in his cantata, *Herr Gott, dich loben alle wir (Lord God, We Praise Thee)*. The coda, with a restatement of the chorale and previously used material, closes the trio in a thunderous fashion of orchestral proportion.

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.

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.

The Fifty-ninth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2361st Concert

SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA CHAMBER MUSIC

Charles Wadsworth, artistic director, piano
Chee-Yun, violin **Andrés Díaz, cello**
Todd Palmer, clarinet **Stephen Prutsman, piano**

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

Admission free

PROGRAM

Samuel Barber (1910–1981) Souvenirs for Piano, Four Hands Op.28 (1952)

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| 1. Waltz | 4. Two -Step |
| 2. Schottische | 5. Hesitation-Tango |
| 3. Pas de deux | 6. Galop |

Prutsman, Wadsworth

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) Trio in A Minor for Clarinet, Cello, and Piano Op. 114 (1891)

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| 1. Allegro | 3. Andante grazioso |
| 2. Adagio | 4. Allegro |

Palmer, Díaz, Prutsman

INTERMISSION

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) Petite Suite for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano
arr. by the composer from Histoire du soldat (1919)

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|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Introduction: The Soldier's March | |
| 2. The Soldier's Violin | 4. Tango – Waltz – Ragtime |
| 3. A Little Concert | 5. The Devil's Dance |

Chee-Yun, Palmer, Wadsworth

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) Trio No. 2 in C Minor for Violin, Cello and Piano Op. 66 (1845)

Allegro energico e con fuoco
Andante espressivo
Molto allegro, quasi presto
Allegro appassionato

Chee-Yun, Díaz, Prutsman

Spoletto Festival USA Chamber Music, an ensemble launched in 1977 in Charleston, South Carolina, under the leadership of Charles Wadsworth, is committed to presenting great chamber music performed by virtuoso musicians. In 1997 the ensemble made its inaugural tour of the United States, which met with resounding success and has been duplicated by equally successful tours each season since then. Spoleto Festival USA Chamber Music appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with ICM Artists, Ltd., of New York City.

Charles Wadsworth enjoys a distinguished international career as a pianist and producer of chamber music programs. In 1969 he created the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in New York, where for twenty years his outstanding leadership as artistic director brought unprecedented popularity and prominence to chamber music. He has been appointed to a number of distinguished posts, among them artistic director of chamber music for the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, artistic director of a special program for "Live from Lincoln Center," and host for a feature on the Spoleto Festival USA on the Arts & Entertainment Network. Among the many honors he has received are France's *Chevalier* in the Order of Arts and Letters, Italy's *Cavaliere Officiale*, and performances at the White House for Presidents Kennedy, Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan.

Violinist **Chee-Yun's** combination of flawless technique, beautiful tone, and compelling musical temperament has quickly captured the attention of the music world. She is an Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient and Young Concert Artists International Auditions winner. In 1993, Chee-Yun returned to her native Korea to receive that country's highest musical honor, the *Nan Pa* award. She was honored again in the United States when she was invited to perform at the White House in honor of the recipients of the National Medal for the Arts. This season marks her fourth Spoleto Festival USA Chamber Music tour.

Since winning first prize at the 1986 Naumburg International Cello Competition, cellist **Andrés Díaz** has exhilarated both critics and audiences with his intense and charismatic performances. A recipient of the prestigious 1998 Avery Fisher Career Grant, as well as a generous grant from the Susan W. Rose Fund for Music, Díaz collaborated frequently with the late pianist Samuel Sanders in performances at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, Merkin Hall, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Atlanta's Spivey Hall. Díaz is associate professor of cello at Boston University and co-director of the Boston University Tanglewood Institute's quartet program.

Born in Hagerstown, Maryland, **Todd Palmer** began playing the clarinet at age sixteen, after having studied the trumpet for seven years. He majored in clarinet performance at the Mannes College of Music under Gervase de Peyer and received the Outstanding Performance and Academic Excellence Awards. As a 1990 Young Concert Artists International recitalist, Palmer appeared in concert and as a teacher at major performing arts centers and universities throughout the United States. His acclaimed recording debut, *Hermit Songs*, was released in 1995 by Koch International Classics.