

The *Suite in C Major, BWV 1009*, is one of six Bach composed while serving as court music master for Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen. Each suite is considered a masterpiece of the genre, and all six contain the same number and pattern of dances: the *prelude*, an improvisatory statement serving as an introduction to the other dances; the *allemande*, a dance of Germanic origin in common time (4/4); the *courante*, a fast, light dance of French origin; the *sarabande*, a dance from the Spanish heritage with an air of courtly refinement; the *bourrée*, a lively, fluent Baroque dance of French origin in duple (2/4) meter and binary (AB) form; and the *gigue*, a baroque dance that originated in England. The *gigue* is written in a fast triplet rhythm and is usually, the closing element in a baroque suite.

Fauré's *Elegie in C Minor for Cello and Orchestra, Op. 24*, an inspired work with ecclesiastical overtones, is a perfect illustration of the evasive yet passionate lyricism for which his music is known. According to the French music critic Bernard Gavoty: "The Elegy is [a stimulating] piece, wherein two themes follow and oppose each other, as in his *Sonata [No. 2] in G Minor, [Op. 117]*. A funeral motif, evoking the image of a solemn march, is contrasted with a pacifying theme [that is] lyrical and exciting, [carrying] the listener on the wings of a dream."

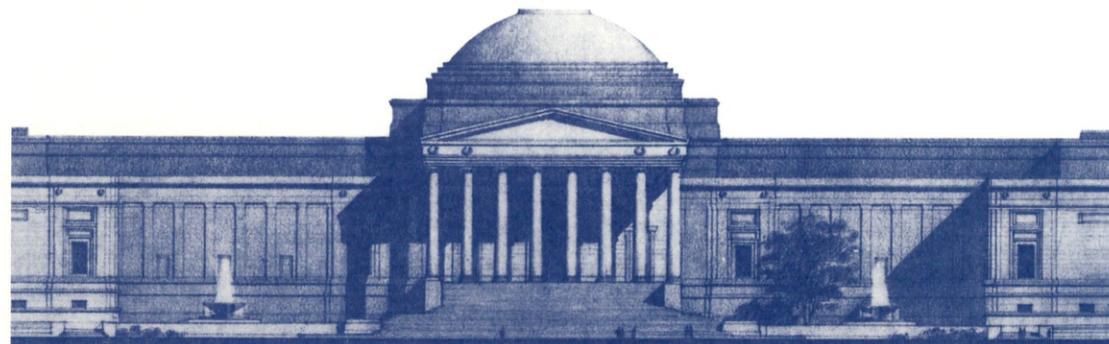
Composed in 1934, shortly after the success of his opera, *Lady Macbeth*, Shostakovich's *Sonata for Cello and Piano in F Major, Op. 40*, is a profound statement of hidden inner emotions thought to have political overtones. This aspect of Shostakovich's music aroused no controversy until 1936, when the Union of Soviet Composers condemned *Lady Macbeth*, declared Shostakovich "persona non grata," and ostracized him. The sonata commences with a shadowy and contemplative theme with ever-increasing melancholy. The second movement is a whirlwind scherzo. The third movement intensifies the feeling of despair, yet at the same time presents one of Shostakovich's most eloquent moments of expression. The fourth movement, as described by James Lyons, editor of *The American Record Guide*, "is one of those neo-Rossinian studies in scintillation that Shostakovich so often proffers as dessert, as if to dispel the seriousness that has gone before. But it is the *Largo* that stays with the listener."

Programs notes by Elmer Booze

The Fifty-ninth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2363d Concert

ERLING BLÖNDAL BENGTTSSON, *cellist*

NINA KAVTARADZE, *pianist*

Sunday Evening, 26 November 2000

Seven O'clock

West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven Sonata in A Major for Cello and Piano
(1770–1827) Op. 69 (1807–1808)

Allegro ma non tanto
Scherzo: Allegro molto
Adagio cantabile; allegro vivace

Johann Sebastian Bach Suite No. 3 in C Major for Solo Cello
(1685–1750) BWV 1009 (1717-1723)

Prelude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Bourrée I & II
Gigue

INTERMISSION

Gabriel Fauré Elegie, Op.24
(1845 –1924) (1880)

Dmitri Shostakovich Sonata in D Minor for Cello and Piano
(1906–1975) Op. 40 (1875–1876)

Moderato
Moderato con moto
Largo
Allegretto

*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.*

A legend in his own lifetime, the distinguished Scandinavian cellist **Erling Blöndal Bengtsson** was accepted at the age of sixteen at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he took up studies with the renowned cellist Gregor Piatigorsky (1903–1976). One year later, he became Piatigorsky's instructing assistant, and the next year was appointed to the faculty of that prestigious institution. Bengtsson, who records on the Danish label Danacord, has been awarded several honors, among them the Knight, First Class, of the Order of Dannebrog in Denmark, and the Iceland's Grand Knight of the Order of the Falcon. In 1993 he received the title *Chevalier du Violoncelle* from the School of Music at Indiana University. A professor of music at the University of Michigan School of Music in Ann Arbor, Erling Blöndal Bengtsson appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Maxim Gershunoff Attractions, Inc., of Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Pianist **Nina Kavtaradze**, a native of Moscow, began her studies at the age of six at the Central Music School of the Moscow Conservatory. Upon admission at age seventeen to the Conservatory proper, she joined the class of Lev Oborin. As a soloist, Miss Kavtaradze has given concerts throughout Russia and the other countries of the former Soviet Union, the United States, and many European countries. Included in her vast repertoire of familiar and lesser-known piano compositions are the complete piano works of Richard Wagner, which she recently recorded on the *Kontrapunkt* label. She and Erling Blöndal Bengtsson formed their duo in 1986, and have toured extensively in this capacity.

The year 1808 saw the birth of Beethoven's *Sonata in A Major, Op. 69*, his first three-movement cello sonata. In the first movement (*Allegro ma non tanto*), the cello begins unaccompanied and without the slow introduction that is typical of classical sonatas. (This feature appears later, at the beginning of the third movement.) The second movement (*Scherzo: Allegro molto*), making up for what it lacks in melody with its strong rhythmic drive, exemplifies the extent to which Beethoven modified the scherzo form. The third movement opens with the slow introduction mentioned above. It sets the stage for a fast finale (*Allegro vivace*) in sonata-allegro form.