

The answer to the mystery of the final chord of the second movement lies in the link to the third movement (*Allegro assai vivace ma serio*). This mystery chord serves to facilitate the return to the original key of F minor and its agitated universe. From the opening measure of this movement, which is actually a *scherzo*, a dotted rhythmic figure projects an immense drive, propelling the listener into a constant ride at full speed up to the trio section. At this juncture, a charming melody offers a serene and most welcome reprieve.

The fourth movement (*Larghetto; allegretto agitato*) commences with a slow introduction of solid harmonic movement, suggesting that the work might end without further unsettling changes of key. Almost without warning, however, the highly inflammatory final theme enters and assumes the dominant role. With an unrelenting rhythm and a change of key to F major, the theme carries the sonata away from the *serioso* character. The work ends in a coda that is extraordinary even for Beethoven, with a compelling crescendo on the F major scale. Visibly upset upon hearing this sonata, Vincent d'Indy (1851–1931) decried the ending as “an error of genius...a Rossinian operatic finale,” while the English writer Gerald Abraham (1904–1988) poetically described the work as “perhaps the most brilliant[ly] pure quartet writing ever conceived by a musician.”

Brahms was one of two pianist-composers who transcribed the *Chaconne* from J. S. Bach's *Partita for Solo Violin, BWV 1004*, for solo piano. The other was Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924). The Busoni transcription is the more frequently played of the two, but it is by no means easier. Brahms' version is for left hand alone, which is one reason for its infrequent performance. Although it is more faithful to Bach's original score than Busoni's transcription, the Brahms *Chaconne* makes no apologies for being a pianistic tour de force.

Paul Wittgenstein (1887–1961), an Austrian-born American pianist who lost his right arm at the Russian front in World War I, commissioned Erich Korngold to write the *Suite for Piano Left Hand and Strings, Op. 23*. Conceived in five movements with an

adventurous harmonic palette, the suite is a colorful work that projects a great deal of drive and verve, while at the same time presenting sounds that are both cacophonous and enigmatic. The opening movement (*Präludium und Fuge*) begins with a conspicuous cadenza for solo piano that fills the role of the prelude. It is resolute, richly chromatic, and ambiguous in its tonality. The fugue also has an uncertain tonal base, in addition to a highly chromatic subject. Its luminous melody utilizes materials from the *Präludium*. The *Walzer* is Viennese in conception, with harmonic dissemination resembling that of the *Präludium*, but it retains its inherent romantic sentiments. The *Groteske* is a scherzo and trio that alternates between the time signatures 4/8 and 3/8 and features a piano cadenza similar to that in the opening movement. The fourth piece, *Lied*, is a heartrending song entitled *Was du mir bist?* from Korngold's *Songs, Op. 22*. The final *Rondo; Variationen* opens with an engaging principal theme, announced by the cello, that brims with emotional intensity and vigor. After a series of ingenious and exciting variations on the theme, a brilliant and fiery coda brings the suite to a successful close.

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.*

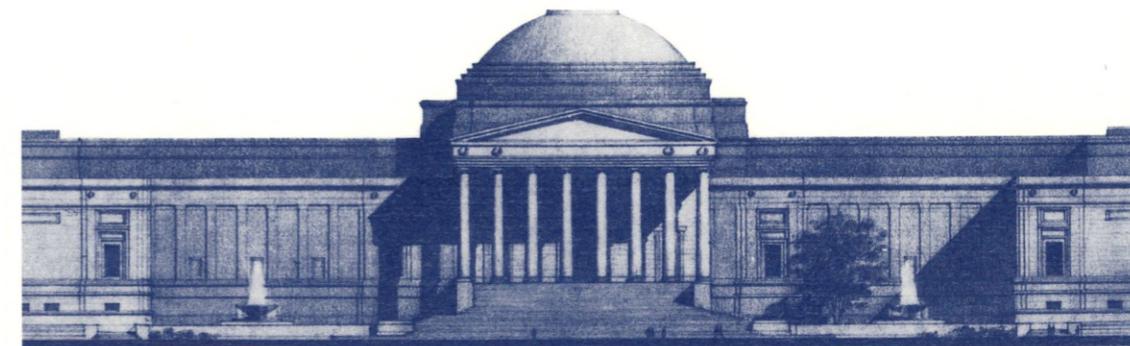
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*The Fifty-ninth Season of*

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and  
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

**National Gallery of Art**



*2368th Concert*

**BORROMEO STRING QUARTET**

**NICHOLAS KITCHEN, violin WILLIAM FEDKENHEUER, violin**  
**MAI MOTOBUCHI, viola YEESUN KIM, cello**

**with GARY GRAFFMANN, piano**

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Sunday Evening, 14 January 2001  
Seven O'clock  
West Building, West Garden Court

*Admission free*

PROGRAM

Alfred Schnittke (1934–1998) Quintet for Piano and Strings (1972–1976)

Moderato  
Tempo di valse  
Andante  
Lento  
Moderato pastorale

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) Quartet No. 11 in F Minor (“Serioso”) Op. 95 (1810)

Allegro con brio  
Allegretto ma non troppo  
Allegro assai vivace ma serioso  
Larghetto; allegretto agitato

INTERMISSION

Johann Sebastian Bach (1650–1750) Chaconne in D Minor from Partita No. 2, BWV 1004, for Solo Violin arranged by Johannes Brahms for piano left hand

Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897–1957) Suite for Piano Left Hand and Strings (1923)

Präludium und Fuge  
Walzer  
Groteske  
Lied  
Rondo; Variationen

Taking its name from a region in northern Italy where it played its first concerts together, the **Borromeo String Quartet** was founded in 1989 by four young musicians from the Curtis Institute of Music. In just eleven years, the quartet has won recognition as one of the most exceptional ensembles of its generation. Winner of the 1991 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, the quartet played its New York debut on the Young Concert Artists Series at the 92d Street Y and its Washington, DC, debut at the Kennedy Center. In 1992 the quartet received an invitation to join the faculty of the New England Conservatory, where it now serves as quartet-in-residence. Exhibiting a distinctive style and personality, the Borromeo String Quartet has been honored with two prestigious awards: second prize at the International String Quartet Competition in Evian, France (1990), and the Cleveland Quartet Award (1998).

Born in New York of Russian parents, **Gary Graffman** began playing the piano at age three. At age seven, he was accepted by the Curtis Institute of music for study with the renowned Isabelle Vengerova. After graduating from that school, he worked intensively for several years with Vladimir Horowitz and at the Marlboro Music Festival with Rudolf Serkin. In 1979 Graffman’s performing career was curtailed by an injury to his right hand. The reduction in his concert activity provided him with a remarkable opportunity to expand his horizons beyond the stage, most notably as director of the Curtis Institute, his alma mater. Among the many awards he has received are the Handel Medallion of the City of New York and the Governor’s Arts Award of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. A Steinway artist, Graffman has made a series of highly acclaimed recordings for the Columbia (CBS) and RCA labels. Gary Graffman and the Borromeo String Quartet appear at the Gallery by arrangement with ICM Artists, Limited, of New York City.

Alfred Schnittke began composing the *Quintet for Piano and Strings* soon after his mother’s death and dedicated it to her memory. The opening movement explores a subdued dynamic range, from triple pianissimo to mezzo forte. The pianist produces tone clusters and the sounds resulting from depressing the pedal and a group of notes on the

keyboard at the same time, separated by periods of silence. In the second movement, the strings introduce a new degree of tension through the use of quarter tones that result in tonal overcasting. In the third movement (*Andante*), the tension of the previous movement is released with aqueous outpourings from the strings, but the movement soon accelerates, with motives built on the illusive quarter tones. The choralelike fourth movement (*Lento*) expresses a wide dynamic range, starting very softly and graduating to extreme loudness, affecting a disconsolate upheaval within the ensemble. The final movement (*Moderato pastorale*) reposes in the format of a passacaglia. Although the repeated horn motive is devoid of a palpable tune, the feeling of grief and nostalgia at the loss of a loved one is undeniable.

Designated by Beethoven as a “serious” work, the *Quartet No. 11 in F Minor, Op. 95*, is the shortest of his string quartets. As stated by Kerman and Tyson in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, it is “unmatched in Beethoven’s output for compression, exaggerated articulation, and a corresponding sense of extreme tension.” The first movement (*Allegro con brio*) explodes immediately and most decidedly with a repetition of five notes by the four instruments in unison that becomes emblematic for the entire movement. A brief melodic diversion follows, offsetting the previous aggressive theme. The unabashed principal motive returns with even more striking force in the coda, then gently whimpers away as a closing statement.

The second movement (*Allegretto ma non troppo*) begins somewhat innocently with a downward and upward six-note scale played by the cello. The scale fans out into a splendid and capacious melody. An intriguing aspect of the movement is its ambiguity of key. Although the key signature indicates D major, this is never firmly established, and a surprise ending adds to the confusion. The movement ends quietly, in a manner that seems to favor D major, but there is a sudden insertion of an upward leap to a diminished seventh, transforming the final chord from major to diminished. Why the suspense? Was there more to be said?