

The second movement (*Funèbre*) is a mournful chant that receives its momentum from a repeated ostinato figure simulating a funeral march. The closing moments of the movement reiterate its opening theme with the juxtaposing of an F-sharp in the cello and an F-natural in the second violin, as if to define death through discord. The final movement begins with an opening theme that is energetic and coruscating, only to be surpassed as the movement closes by a theme of even greater vivacity. The work closes with a three-voice fugato.

Honegger considered the third and last of his string quartets to be his best, and dedicated it to the generous American patron of new music of his time, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. The three movements were composed in reverse order. The movement that eventually took its place as the first (*Allegro*) is in 6/4 time and presents a hallmark of Honegger's musical technique: polychordal writing. According to Arthur Cohen *The Literature of Chamber Music*, the ensemble "[is] treated almost like a minimal string orchestra. But the music is lean; no fat remains on its edges." The *Adagio* makes use of the ABA form and presents a sharp contrast in texture with the outer movements. The third movement, also marked *Allegro*, commences with a subtle and plaintive pizzicato melody in the cello that grows into a fulminating main theme, played in unison by the other strings. A second theme, announced initially by the viola and cello, benefits from an accompaniment that is born of the first theme's rhythmic impetus. After a dense and invigorating section in which Honegger condenses the elements from the opening statement, the quartet is brought to an end by a short melody that results in a piece of music that is "ultradramatic" (Cohen).

Program notes by Elmer Booze

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

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.

Concerts in April and May 2001

Sundays at 7:00 p.m. in the West Building, West Garden Court

April

15 No concert

22 **Barbara Moser, pianist**

Mozart: *Fantasy in C Minor*
Beethoven: "Eroica" *Variations*
Schubert/Liszt: *Five Songs*
Bellini/Liszt: *Réminiscences de Norma*

29 **Karen Johnson, flutist**
Brian Ganz, pianist

Vaughan Williams: *Ballet Suite*
Gieseking: *Variations on a Theme by Grieg*
Works by Poulenc, Anne Boyd, and Sotireos Vlahopoulos

May/Fifty-eighth American Music Festival

6 **Diane Schuur**

Jazz concert

13 **National Men's Chorus**
Thomas Beveridge, conductor

Music by Thomas Beveridge and other American composers

20 **Jeffrey Chappell, pianist**

Music by Charles Griffes, James Grant, Jeffrey Chappell, Sotireos Vlahopoulos, and other composers

27 **Marilyn Taylor, soprano**
Robert Brewer, pianist

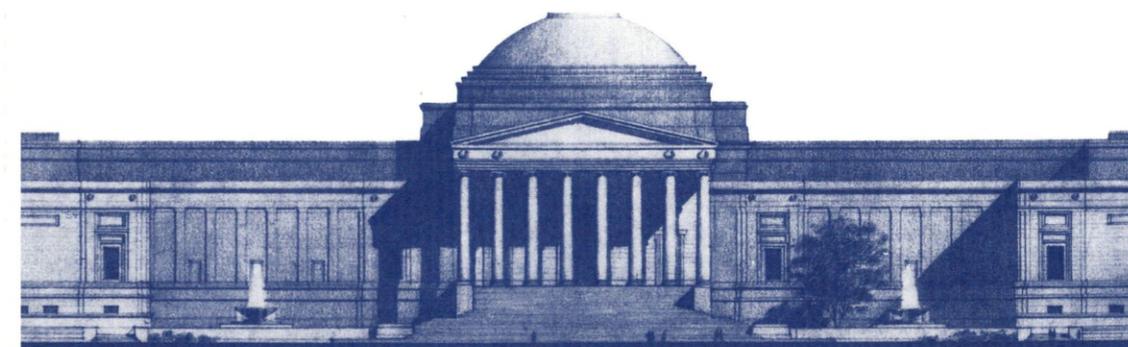
Music by Charles Vardell, Robert Ward, and Ken Frazelle

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

The Fifty-ninth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2380th Concert

PARISII STRING QUARTET

THIERRY BRODARD, violin **JEAN-MICHEL BERRETTE, violin**
DOMINIQUE LOBET, viola **JEAN-PHILIPPE MARTIGNONI, cello**

Sunday Evening, 8 April 2001
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

PROGRAM

Selections from the works of "Les Six"

Darius Milhaud
(1892–1974) String Quartet No. 6
Op. 77 (1922)

Souple et animé
Très lent
Très vif et rythmé

Louis Durey
(1888–1979) String Quartet No. 2
(1910)

Très animé
Presto ma non troppo
Très modéré

Germaine Tailleferre
(1892–1983) String Quartet
(1918)

Modéré
Intermède

INTERMISSION

Darius Milhaud String Quartet No. 4
Op. 46 (1918)

Vif
Funèbre
Très animé

Arthur Honegger
(1892–1955) String Quartet No. 3
(1936)

Allegro
Adagio
Allegro

Four prize-winning graduates of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Paris formed the **Parisii Quartet** in 1984 and continue to the present day as its charter members: violinists **Thierry Brodard** and **Jean-Michel Berrette**, violist **Dominique Lobet**, and cellist **Jean-Philippe Martignoni**. The quartet won early acclaim with its triumphs at three major international competitions, Banff (1986), Munich (1987), and Evian (1987), and tours regularly throughout Europe and the United Kingdom. Noted for its performances of distinctive and unusual repertoire, the quartet has distinguished itself with award-winning recordings of intriguing works by such French composers as Menu, Pierné, and Tailleferre, as well as the complete works for string quartet by Anton Webern. The quartet's repertoire currently includes the extraordinary *Le livre pour quatuor* by Pierre Boulez. The Parisii Quartet appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Melvin Kaplan, Inc., of Burlington, Vermont.

Milhaud's *String Quartet No. 6* is dedicated to Francis Poulenc. It is written in three short movements that are a model of brevity. The opening movement comprises an abbreviated sonata-allegro form. The viola and cello express the vivaciousness of the opening theme, which is actually two melodies of different character. The violins enter subsequently, the second violin playing first over a detached accompaniment and the first violin joining with two phrases, one in E-flat major and the other in F major. The development section incorporates materials previously heard through an interplay of counterpoint that leads to the recapitulation, in which the theme heard at the beginning of the movement is played without alteration. The second movement is in the key of B major, with a meter signature of 8/8. Each instrument is projected in a solo performance with a unique theme, but it is the first violin that carries the principal theme. The last movement is in the key of G major, with an exuberant opening theme not unlike the folk dances of the Auvergne region of France. Milhaud introduces variegated rhythmic patterns through the use of 2/8, 3/8, 4/8, 5/8, and 6/8 meter changes.

Acting against her parents' wish that she not study music, Germaine Tailleferre entered the Paris Conservatoire in 1904 at age twelve, after having distinguished herself as a performer from the age of eight. It was here that she studied with some of the best teachers in France, including Charles-Marie Widor (1844–1937), under whose guidance she won three top prizes. The end of her formal training came with her private studies in composition and orchestration with the renowned theorist Charles Koechlin (1867–1950), followed by advice and encouragement from Maurice Ravel (1875–1937). She was the only female among the group known informally as "Les Six" and formally as the Société des Nouveaux Jeunes. Her membership in the group was secured by the submission of two works: *Jeux de plein air* (1918), for two pianos, and two movements of her *String Quartet* (1919). According to writer Jacinthe Harbec, her early compositions featured two styles: impressionism enriched by exotic, oriental colors, polyharmony, polytonality, and tone clusters, as expressed in *Image* for flute, clarinet, celeste, piano, and string quartet (1918); and classicism, as exemplified by the string quartet on this program. Jean Cocteau (1891–1963) poetically described her as "a Marie Laurencin for the ear, whose music has always been gracious and feminine."

Louis Durey decided to devote himself to music at age nineteen, after attending a performance of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Other important influences were the songs of Arnold Schoenberg and the music of Stravinsky and Satie. Durey distanced himself from "Les Six" after only a short association with the group, preferring to write music with more sober gravity than was typical of their style. From the mid-1930s to the mid-1950s, Durey undertook numerous projects linking music and politics, including a cycle of songs with texts by Mao Tse-tung. He was an officer in two left-wing French organizations for musicians, the Fédération Musicale Populaire and the Association Française des Musiciens Progressistes.

Milhaud's *Fourth String Quartet*, dedicated to Felix Delgrange, was written in Rio de Janeiro and first performed in 1919 by the Women's Capelle Quartet. The first movement, with a time signature of 9/8, is of a bucolic nature. It introduces the polytonality that continues throughout the work.