

of stillness, as on the sea just at the turning of the tide. From this mood emerge linear movements with Gregorian inflections and the occasional echo of sounds of nature. *Space Mirror*: Here the first violin and the cello contrast their extreme registers in pure and calm lines, interrupted by moments of alarm. The piece eventually returns to its point of departure, as in the illusion of a mirror or retrograde movement. *Litanies*: The 'pivot chord,' entrusted since the beginning of the work to the low strings, reappears here in animated and intense form, with violence and insistence. *Litanies 2*: This section uses modal chant based on four, then five tones, always similar, but announced in different orders. *Constellations* sets up a central pitch around which the sonorous events twist themselves and accumulate. In contrast to the first *Nocturne*, *Nocturne 2* is filled with motions and vivacity, all maintained within an atmosphere of mystery. The final section, *Suspended Time*, evokes the mood of the first section. A kind of clockwork motion is suspended over a base of harmonics like distant bells."

The first movement of Beethoven's *String Quartet, Opus 59, No. 3*, begins as the Dutilleux work ended, with a passage that seems devoid of direction and time. It is not long, however, before the movement becomes jaunty and upbeat, with two exuberant themes. The second movement also begins mysteriously, with a heavy, despondent theme in the violin over repeated staccato notes in the cello. But, with the arrival of the second theme, a mood of warmth and activity takes over. The third movement is a traditional eighteenth-century minuet with a sharp, penetrating trio. The last movement sets forth its mood immediately, with soft but very rapid passages in all instruments. Beethoven endows every note with force and energy that work to propel the music forward. This feature, combined with the build-up of voices playing the fugal theme at full *fortissimo*, results in an ending of stunning impact.

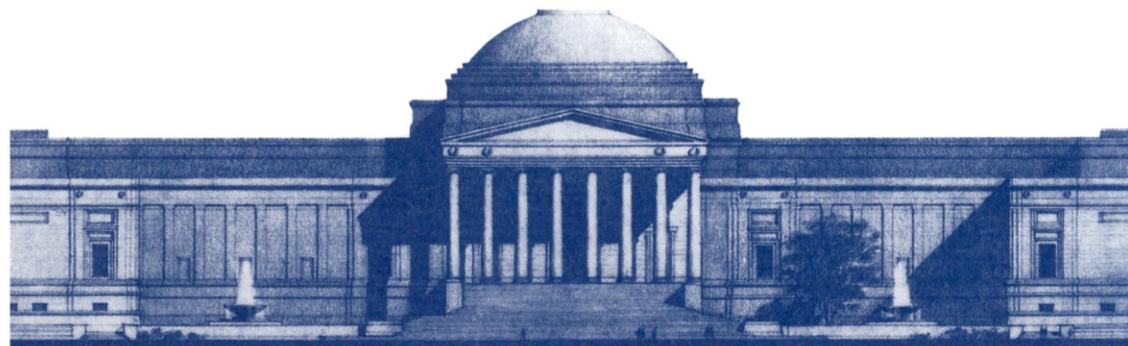
Program notes by Elliott Conklin

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that all electronic devices are turned off.

The Sixtieth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2396th Concert

MENDELSSOHN STRING QUARTET

MYRIAM FRIED, violin NICHOLAS MANN, violin
ULRICH EICHENAUER, viola MARCY ROSEN, cello

Sunday Evening, 11 November 2001
Seven O'clock
West Building, East Garden Court

Admission free

PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

String Quartet in A Major
Opus 18, No. 5 (1800)

Allegro
Menuetto
Andante cantabile
Allegro

Henri Dutilleux
(b. 1916)

“Ainsi la nuit” for String Quartet

Nocturne
Miroir d’espace
Litanies
Litanies 2
Constellations
Nocturne 2
Temps suspendu

INTERMISSION

Beethoven

String Quartet in C Major (“Eroica”)
Opus 59, no. 3 (1805–1806)

Introduzione: Andante con moto; allegro vivace
Andante con moto quasi allegretto
Menuetto: Grazioso
Allegro molto

*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.*

Two decades into its musical career, the **Mendelssohn String Quartet** holds a reputation as one of the very finest in skill and creativity. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, “The Mendelssohnians [play] with fierce physicality and emotional abandon, intelligent insight, and supreme technique.” Venues in which the quartet has appeared include Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Concertgebouw, Wigmore Hall, the Tonhalle in Zurich, and the Library of Congress. The Mendelssohn Quartet has also toured The Netherlands, England, Italy, and Switzerland. It was the only American ensemble invited to appear at the First International Dialogues Festival in Kiev, Ukraine. Resident quartet of the Eastern Shore Chamber Music Festival and the North Carolina School of the Arts, the Mendelssohn Quartet also holds the prestigious position of Blodgett Artists-in-Residence at Harvard University.

Graceful in its Mozartian melodies, the opening *Allegro* of Beethoven’s *Quartet in A Major* winds effortlessly and whimsically through successive ideas in a somewhat spare texture countered by forceful counterpoint, a brisk temperament, and colorful harmonies. Breaking from traditional quartet design, Beethoven places the *Menuetto* as the second movement, rather than the third. Full of sanguine melodiousness, this movement borders on a lean Haydnesque texture, and its second section is endowed with a dark harmonic color. The *Andante cantabile* is a set of variations that comprise the heart of the quartet. It has antecedents in the variations that occur in both Haydn’s *Quartet in D Major, Opus 20, No. 4*, and Mozart’s *Quartet in A Major, KV 464*. The final *Allegro* also owes a debt to Mozart, as it borrows a theme from the same quartet.

Henri Dutilleux was born in Angiers, France, and studied at the Paris Conservatory under Henri-Paul Busser and Jean and Noel Gallon. His career as a composer has been simultaneous with a life of public service, in that he has held important administrative positions in French musical life, most notably as chief of the music division of French National Radio.

For his string quartet, Dutilleux has provided the following notes: “‘Ainsi la nuit’ (‘Thus the Night’) is divided into seven episodes. The titles of the sections refer, as does the overall title, to a certain poetic or spiritual atmosphere, not to a narrative idea. *Nocturne*: The mood is one