

Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen* is undoubtedly one of the world's most famous and beloved violin masterpieces. Although widely thought of as a derivative of the gypsy violin music of Spain, *Zigeunerweisen* relates more to that of Hungarian gypsies. Although one may debate the success of Sarasate's attempt to integrate all the themes he uses into one complete whole, the work sustains the listener's fascination with the violin's pyrotechnics, even as each section stands on its own.

Program notes by Elmer Booze

*Concerts at the National Gallery of Art*

**20 January**

**Eugenia Zukerman, flutist  
Rachelle Jonck, pianist**

Works by William Grant Still and other composers in honor of the birth anniversary of Martin Luther King

**27 January**

**The Iceland Trio**

Piano trios by Sweensson, Beethoven, and Brahms

*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.*

*During the months of January and February, recent performances by the National Gallery Orchestra can be heard Wednesday evenings at 9:00 p.m. on WETA, 90.9 FM.*

*The Sixtieth Season of*

**THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS**

**National Gallery of Art**



*2405th Concert*

**LIANG CHAI, violinist**

**DAVID DU, pianist**

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Sunday Evening, 13 January 2002  
Seven O'clock  
West Building, West Garden Court

*Admission free*

## PROGRAM

Francesco Geminiani  
(1687–1762)

Sonata No. 1 in A Major  
Op. 1 (1716)

Adagio; presto; adagio; presto; adagio  
Allegro  
Grave; presto

Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770–1827)

Sonata No. 9 in A Minor (“Kreutzer”)  
Op. 47 (1802–1803)

Adagio sostenuto; presto  
Andante con variazioni  
Presto

## INTERMISSION

John Corigliano  
(b. 1938)

Sonata for Violin and Piano  
(1963)

Allegro  
Andantino  
Lento  
Allegro

Pablo de Sarasate  
(1844–1908)

Zigeunerweisen (Gypsy Airs)  
Op. 20, No. 1 (1878)

Hailed by the string magazine, *The Strad*, as a “large-scaled player with a warm, pleasing sound,” violinist **Liang Chai** is among the foremost artists of his generation. Born in Shenyang, People’s Republic of China, to a composer father and a mother who was a singer, Chai began to play the piano at the age of four and switched to the violin at age nine. After two years of violin study, he was accepted into the Conservatory of Shenyang. In 1986 he was accepted without audition into Beijing’s Central Conservatory of Music, and in 1991 he came to the United States on a full scholarship to the University of Southern California. A subsequent full scholarship from the Starling Foundation enabled him to study with the eminent violin teacher Dorothy DeLay and her associate Hyo Kang at the Juilliard School of Music in New York City. Chai received the master of music degree from Juilliard in the spring of 1997 and was awarded a two-year teaching appointment as a fellow of the DeLay-Starling Institute. Chai played his New York City solo debut with the Korean Symphony Orchestra at Alice Tully Hall and his debut in China with the Beijing National Symphony Orchestra, performing the Tchaikovsky *Violin Concerto*. He appeared at the renowned Newport Music Festival in 1999 and 2000.

Pianist **David Du** is the son of not one but two composers. He began studying the piano at the age of six and composition at the age of ten. By the time he was thirteen, some of his work had already been published in a music magazine. In 1979 he was admitted to the secondary school affiliated with the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. He majored in piano and won several national and school competitions. In 1983 the Ministry of Culture of the Central Government in China selected Du to participate in the Tokyo International Music Competition, at which he won fifth prize. The Japanese critics praised the sixteen-year-old’s playing as “unaffected and natural, possessing emotional depth and youthful energy.” Du completed his formal musical education at the Juilliard School of Music, where his teachers were Russell Sherman and Oxana Yablonskaya. He has performed in solo recitals and with orchestras in Australia, the Philippines, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, France, Holland, and the United States.

Francesco Geminiani, a student and disciple of Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713), left his native Italy to settle in London in 1714. A multi-talented virtuoso violinist, teacher, theorist, and composer, he gained instant fame and recognition as a leader in English musical society. Some of his instrumental works, including sonatas for solo violin and *Concerti grossi*, are respected icons in the baroque repertoire. Modeled after the sonatas of Corelli, Geminiani's sonatas are more sonorous, more chromatic in harmony and melody, freer in rhythm and form, more dramatic in concept, and more difficult to play than those of the elder master. In addition, Geminiani included ornaments in all of the movements, whereas Corelli embellished only his slow movements.

The British mulatto violin virtuoso George A. Polgreen Bridgetower (c. 1779–1860) was the son of an African father and a European mother. His brilliant violin playing greatly affected Beethoven and inspired him to compose the “*Kreutzer*” Sonata, Op. 47. Bridgetower played the premiere of the work in 1803 in Vienna. Sometime later, Beethoven and Bridgetower ceased to be friends, purportedly after a jealous quarrel over a woman, and the sonata was dedicated to the distinguished French violinist Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766–1831), who became the sonata’s eponym. Ironically, Kreutzer found the work “outrageously unintelligible” and never played it.

The sonata begins with a slow chordal introduction, played first by the violin and then by the piano. A passionate *Presto* section follows, unfolding into an extended passage for solo piano. The second movement (*Andante con variazioni*) is the best known section of the work and presents an unadorned theme in the piano that is subsequently joined by the violin. The initial simplicity of the *Andante* is gradually replaced by increasing elaboration as the movement progresses through four embroidered variations. The finale (*Presto*) is a robust and energetic tarantella that begins with a single chord played *fortissimo* on the piano, followed by the entrance of a 6/8 rhythmic pattern, set by the violin. The driving motion thus initiated launches the movement into a virtuoso cyclonic conclusion that requires uncompromising precision on the part of both performers.

The 1964 Spoleto Festival Competition for the Creative Arts, sponsored by Boston University, was the setting for the world premiere of John Corigliano’s *Sonata for Violin and Piano*. Corigliano has written: “For the most part, [the sonata is] a tonal work, although it incorporates non-tonal and polytonal sections, as well as other twentieth-century harmonic, rhythmic, and constructional techniques. The listener will recognize the work as a product of an American writer, although this is more the result of an American writing music than writing ‘American’ music—a second-nature, unconscious action on the composer’s part. Rhythmically, the work is extremely varied. Meters change in almost every measure, and independent rhythmic patterns in each instrument are common. The [sonata] was originally entitled *Duo*, [making obvious] the treatment of both instruments as co-partners. Virtuosity is of great importance in adding color and energy to a work [that] is basically an optimistic statement, but the virtuosity is always motivated by musical means. To cite an example: the last movement rondo includes a virtuosic polyrhythmic and polytonal perpetual motion, [the] thematic material and accompaniment figures [of which] are composed of three distinct elements derived from materials stated in the beginning of the movement. The sixteenth-note perpetual motion theme is originally a counterpoint to the initial theme [of the movement]. Against this are set two figures—an augmentation of the primary theme and, in combination with that, a 5/8 rhythmic ostinato, originally to accompany a totally different earlier passage. All three elements combine to form a new virtuoso perpetual motion theme, which is, of course, subjected to further development and elaboration.” In a *New York Times* critique that also appeared in 1964, Corigliano was said to have “the audacity and the skill to take an old musical joke like the perpetual-motion finale and restate it in modern terms without sounding simple-minded and without losing the point.... He has an important future.”