

violent octaves continue the tension that is built up during the musical bridge that connects the two subjects. Brahms foregoes a development section, preferring to elaborate on the first theme and the bridge passage. A radically new recapitulation and a powerful and brilliant coda close the work.

Program notes by Elmer Booze

Concerts at the National Gallery of Art

3 February

The Debussy String Quartet
with James Dick, *pianist* Quartets and quintets by Franck,
Shostakovich, and Haydn

10 February

The New England Spiritual Ensemble Traditional American Negro
Spirituals

17 February

The Ciompi String Quartet
with William Ransom,
pianist Quartets and quintets by Ravel,
Saint-Saëns, and Mark Kuss

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

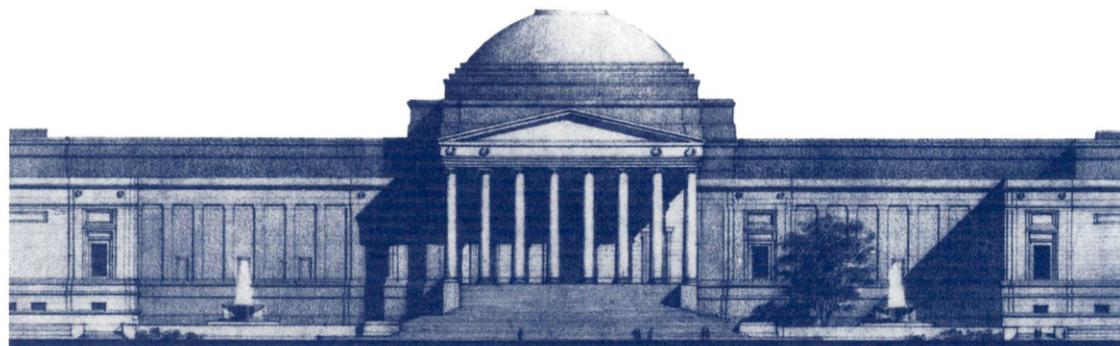
*For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:30 p.m.*

*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



2407th Concert

THE ICELAND TRIO

SIBBI BERNHARDSSON, violin
SIGURDUR BJARKI GUNNARSSON, cello
NINA-MARGRÉT GRÍMSDÓTTIR, piano

Sunday Evening, 27 January 2002
Seven O'clock
West Building, East Garden Court

Admission free

PROGRAM

Atli Heimir Sveinsson
(b. 1938)

Piano Trio No. 1
(1985–2001)

- I. (1' 45")
- II. (0' 40")
- III. (1' 20")
- IV. (4' 00")
- V. (2' 00")

United States premiere performance

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

Piano Trio in D Major (“Ghost”)
Op. 70, No. 1 (1808)

Allegro vivace e con brio
Largo assai ed espressivo
Finale: Presto

INTERMISSION

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)

Piano Trio No. 1 in B Major
Op. 8 (1853–1854)

Allegro con brio
Scherzo: Allegro molto; Trio: Meno allegro
Adagio
Finale: Allegro

Founded in 1998 in New York by three musicians who are natives of Iceland, **The Iceland Trio** presents both chamber music by Icelandic and Scandinavian composers and the standard classical trio repertoire. While some of the Scandinavian compositions have been commissioned by the Iceland Trio, others are premieres of previously unknown works that its members have discovered. During the 2000–2001 season, the trio performed concerts in the United States, Canada, and Iceland, drawing full houses and receiving laudatory comments from critics and audiences alike. The trio has performed in New York City, Washington, DC, Seattle, Milwaukee, Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Calgary. It has been a featured ensemble at the Chrysler Museum of Art and the Azalea Festival in Norfolk, Virginia, and the prestigious Kirkjubæjarklaustur Festival in Iceland.

Violinist **Sibbi Bernhardsson** began his studies at the age of five in Iceland. After graduating from the Reykjavik College of Music, he continued his education at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, receiving a bachelor of music degree and election to the honor society. He also obtained the master of music degree from Northern Illinois University. He has performed internationally in such prestigious venues as Carnegie’s Weill Recital Hall and Northwestern University’s Pick–Staiger Concert Hall and has collaborated with such artists as Michael Tree, Ursula Oppens, and Paul Katz. He has received several awards and prizes, including the Icelandic Lindar award, and has received critical praise for the release of his solo CD on the Icelandic label Skref. Bernhardsson also performs with the Pacifica String Quartet.

Cellist **Sigurdur Bjarki Gunnarsson** graduated from the Reykjavik College of Music in 1995 and continued his studies at the Manhattan School of Music in New York under the instruction of David Soyer. He received the master of music degree from the Juilliard School of Music in 2000, studying under Harvey Shapiro. In addition to solo appearances with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra and on BBC Radio, Gunnarsson has performed in chamber music recitals at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and venues in the United Kingdom and Canada. He currently resides in New York City.

Nína-Margrét Grímsdóttir, one of Iceland's most acclaimed pianists of the younger generation, performs regularly on Icelandic television and radio, participates in festivals, and gives master classes. Grímsdóttir graduated in 1985 from the Reykjavik College of Music with a soloist diploma. She holds the master of arts degree from the City University of London, the performance diploma from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, and the professional studies diploma from the Mannes College of Music in New York. Grímsdóttir is currently completing the doctor of musical arts degree at City University of New York's Graduate Center.

Composer Atli Heimir Sveinsson studied piano at the Reykjavik College of Music and composition with Raphael and Bern Zimmermann in Cologne, Germany, from 1959 to 1962. In addition, he worked with Karlheinz Stockhausen, Henri Pousseur, and Gottfried Michael Koenig, with whom he studied electronic composition. Upon completion of his studies, Sveinsson returned to Iceland and became active as a composer and teacher. His works include nine solo concertos, *Hjakk* (1979) for symphony orchestra, an opera, *Silkitromman* (1982), *Gloria* (1981) for solo piano, and the choir suite *Haustmyndir* (1982). President of the Icelandic Society of Composers from 1972 to 1983, Sveinsson is a member of the Swedish Academy of Music.

Beethoven's *Piano Trios, Op. 70, Nos. 1 and 2*, are dedicated to Countess Anna Marie Erdödy, whom he admired. The opening movement of *Op. 70, No. 1 (Allegro vivace e con brio)* presents themes that are as dramatic as they are contrasting. The vigorous first theme is played in octaves by the three instruments, after which the cello plays a second theme that is resplendent in its lyricism. The commodious use of both subjects in proximal imitation injects a feeling of hopelessness without salvation. A lengthy development section that explores diversity by means of sudden shifts in dynamics and texture is followed by the closing coda, which adopts octave scales from the opening theme.

A continuation of this solemn mood prevails in the second movement (*Largo assai ed espressivo*), which has the distinction of being perhaps the longest slow movement in all of Beethoven's chamber music. The

violin and cello open the movement by playing in octaves. A seven-note theme conjures a ghostly motif that is repeated without interruption throughout the entire section. In the trio of this movement, weightless tremolo chords from the piano accentuate the eeriness, prompting an editor to add the subtitle, *Geister-Trio* ("Ghost Trio"), to the published score. The third movement (*Finale: Presto*), wrapped in the sonata-allegro form, distances itself in spirit and emotion from its preceding companions with a sunlit exterior that quickly expunges the aftermath of a lugubrious night and brings the trio to a convivial and extroverted conclusion.

Brahms had just turned twenty when he wrote the first version of his *Piano Trio in B Major, Op. 8*. Almost forty years later, at age fifty-eight, he published a revision. The Iceland Trio plays the latter version, which, according to the distinguished English music scholar, pianist, and composer Sir Donald Francis Tovey (1875–1940), is essentially a new piece of music. The first movement (*Allegro con brio*) unfolds in the sonata-allegro form. The protracted and euphonious opening melody indulges in meter changes and contains turbulent triplet figures. The contrasting second subject is shorter and more relaxed. Upon revisiting this theme, Brahms evidently found it to be more suitable for development than he had the first time around. In the later version of the trio, the development section incorporates the second subject and reconciles it and the first subject amicably. The recapitulation, which is also new in the revised version, is freer than the original and includes a coda that is radiant, ingenious, and focused.

The second movement (*Scherzo and Trio*) remains almost identical to the original version. The third movement (*Adagio*), on the other hand, is completely rewritten. A melancholy dialogue between the piano and the strings is followed by the entrance of an ardent melody for the cello. The dialogue resumes in a sublime modulation with a charismatic piano part. The opening dialogue is repeated once more, with even greater effect, in the recapitulation. Brahms also saw fit to revise the *Finale (Allegro)*, and did so more drastically than in any other movement. The original elongated opening subject is retained, but the second subject is new. Its