

"The Harp" *Quartet* was not a title designated by Beethoven but an acquired appellation stemming from the persistent appearance of the harplike pizzicato passages in the opening movement of the *Quartet, Op. 7*. Following the sonata-allegro format (exposition, development, and recapitulation), the first movement (*Poco adagio; allegro*) begins with a brief introduction of four notes that are repeated before commencing with the principal theme of the exposition. The recapitulation enters after a brief recall of the opening movement's theme and is followed by a dashing coda that ends the movement. The second movement (*Adagio ma non troppo*) houses a lyrical melody of sublime tenderness that exudes a state of spiritual endowment. Its format mimics that of a rondo. After its initial appearance by the first violin, the theme returns several times in slightly varied forms. The third movement (*Presto*) is a highly spirited *Scherzo* in an ABABA format, the coda of which acts as an introduction to the fourth movement (*Allegretto con variazioni*). Given the forceful nature of its predecessor, this movement appears to be anticlimactic. However, the composer cleverly exploits the third variation by borrowing its theme for an extravagant coda that is a brilliantly designed finish for the work.

Program note by Elmer Booze

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

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

This is the final concert of the National Gallery's 2001–2002 season. Concerts will resume on Sunday, 6 October, with a performance by the National Gallery Orchestra, George Manos conducting.

The Sixtieth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2427th Concert

**NATIONAL GALLERY CHAMBER PLAYERS
STRING QUARTET**

GEORGE MANOS, artistic director

CLAUDIA CHUDACOFF, violin REGINO MADRID, violin
LISA PONTON, viola DIANA FISH, cello

Sunday Evening, 30 June 2002
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

PROGRAM

Béla Bartók
(1881–1945)

String Quartet No. 3
Sz 85 (1927)

Prima parte: Moderato
Seconda parte: Allegro
Ricapitolazione della prima parte: Moderato
Coda: Allegro molto

Ralph Vaughan Williams
(1872–1958)

String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor
("For Jean on Her Birthday")
(1942–1943)

Prelude: Allegro appassionato
Romance: Largo
Scherzo: Allegro
Epilogue: Andante sostenuto
("Greetings from Joan to Jean")

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

String Quartet No. 10 in E-flat Major
("The Harp") Op. 7 (1809)

Poco adagio; Allegro
Adagio ma non troppo
Presto
Allegretto con variazioni

The **National Gallery Chamber Players String Quartet** is composed of members of the National Gallery Orchestra and appears as a regular feature of each season of concerts at the Gallery. Under the guidance of Gallery music director George Manos, the quartet surveys and performs rarely heard masterpieces of chamber music.

A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, violinist **Claudia Chudacoff** has among her credits several solo appearances with the National Gallery Orchestra under George Manos, including a recent performance of Brahms' *Concerto for Violin, Cello, and Orchestra*. Other guest orchestra appearances have been with the Toledo Symphony, the Louisville Ballet, and the Ann Arbor Symphony. She has been first violinist of the National Gallery Chamber Players String Quartet since its inception.

Regino Madrid, a native of Los Angeles, received the bachelor of music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music in 1998. He is currently a member of the "President's Own" United States Marine Band and plays regularly at the White House. He has played with the Cleveland Orchestra, the Erie Philharmonic, and the Canton Symphony in Ohio. He has participated in numerous music festivals, including Holland Music Sessions, the Santa Barbara Music Academy of the West, Musicorda, and the professional studies program at Soundfest with the Colorado Quartet in Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

Violist **Lisa Ponton** has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician in concerts and radio broadcasts throughout Germany, Scandinavia, and the United States. She has performed chamber music with the National Musical Arts and Washington Musica Viva, and her interest in contemporary music has led to numerous premieres. Ponton is currently a member of the "President's Own" Marine Chamber Orchestra. She is a former principal violist of Sweden's Malmoe Symphony Orchestra and former associate principal violist of the Island Symphony Orchestra. She holds degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, the Juilliard School of Music in New York, and the Hochschule für Musik in Cologne, Germany.

Cellist **Diana Fish** came to Washington in 1994 as a member of the Marine Band's White House Chamber Orchestra. She graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music as a student of Orlando Cole and later did graduate work at Indiana University, where her teacher was Janos Starker. A founding member of the Whitney Trio, she has performed throughout the United States, including chamber music performances at the National Gallery and the Phillips Collection.

Béla Bartók's "classical middle period" includes such works as the *Miraculous Mandarin*, the *First Piano Concerto*, and the *String Quartet No. 3 in C-sharp Major*. This last work won for Bartók a first prize from the Music Fund Society of Philadelphia, an award that he shared with the celebrated Italian composer Alfredo Casella (1883–1947).

Approximately fifteen minutes in length, *Quartet No. 3* is Bartók's shortest, with an overall three-part construction (ABA) and a fiery coda. The entire work is performed in one continuous movement. The first part (*Prima parte: Moderato*) uses the ternary form as well, with a slow introduction that centers around short canonic themes, before moving into its B section, which has a livelier tempo. The recapitulation (the return of section A) is notably altered. The second part (*Seconda parte: Allegro*) is written using the sonata-allegro form with two main themes. The principal theme is introduced by the violins and the second by the viola and cello. By quoting near its end the *martellato* chords from the first part, the second part gives a cyclical reference to the work as a whole. The *Recapitulazione della prima parte: Moderato* reintroduces the *Prima parte* in a markedly abridged and modified form. The *Coda*, with its fugato and canonic motifs, is based on music of the *Seconda parte*. It closes the work brilliantly in what can best be described as a cyclonic fanfare.

Vaughan Williams' *String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor* was one of several works he composed during World War II. Arthur Cohn, author of *The Literature of Chamber Music*, acclaims it as "Music of wholehearted, restful spirituality." Vaughan Williams dedicated this particular quartet to his friend Jean Stewart, a violist and member of the Menges Quartet. His explicit direction for this work was to have its dedication mentioned

always. In 1943, on her twenty-ninth birthday, Vaughan Williams sent to Jean Stewart the first two movements with a message that "the *Scherzo* refuses to materialize" and was prepared to have it available on her next birthday. He completed the last two movements, however, within a few months, paving the way for the work's premiere on 12 October 1944, his own seventy-second birthday. The Menges Quartet was given the honor of performing on that occasion. The theme for the third movement is based on the music Vaughan Williams wrote for the 1940–1941 film *49th Parallel*. A theme created for a projected film entitled *Joan of Arc*, which did not materialize, is the reference point for the last movement's subtitle, "Greetings from Joan to Jean."

Vaughan Williams studied both the violin and the viola as a young student and expressed a preference for the viola. His affection for the instrument is evident in the dominant role he assigns to it within the four movements. Each movement's theme begins with the violist as soloist, and the same instrument closes the two inner movements. The emotional drama and explosive spirit of the opening movement (*Prelude: Allegro appassionato*) is implicit. The mood, which is described by writer Michael Kennedy as "restless and troubled," spills over into the next two movements. He compares this movement to Vaughan Williams' *Sixth Symphony*, in which he finds a similar mood. The second movement (*Romance: Largo*), with its vibrato-free tone, is imbued with contrapuntal settings for each instrument, while at the same time letting the unmuted viola take the theme. The third movement (*Scherzo: Allegro*) continues the emphasis on the viola by muting the other three instruments. The theme from the film *49th Parallel* is the principal one given to the viola; two other themes are announced as well by the viola. The fourth movement (*Epilogue: Andante*) begins in the key of F major with the theme scored for the intended film *Joan of Arc*. The sanguine mood projected in the finale of this quartet is one of sanctification. There is a visionary change of key to D major that closes the work in a peaceful manner. Again citing Cohn: "This is a reflective and serene work, the creation of a man in his seventies, but with the fresh tones and ideas of a young artist."