

December

22 Cantate Chamber Singers Christmas music by Benjamin
Gisele Becker, music Britten
director

29 Luigi Piovano, cellist Sonatas by Brahms, Schumann,
Luisa Prayer, pianist and Saint-Saëns

January

5 National Gallery Orchestra Gala Viennese New Year Concert
George Manos, conductor

12 Gary Graffman, pianist Reinicke: *Sonata, Op. 179*
Von Sauer: *Waldandacht*
Chopin/Godowsky: *Etudes*
J. S. Bach/Brahms: *Chaconne in*
D Minor
Reger: *Four Etudes*
Blumenfeld: *Etude, Op. 36*

19 The Verdehr Trio Mozart: *Trio, K. 358*
Walter Verdehr, violin Fanny Mendelssohn: *Romance*
Elsa Ludwig Verdehr, Armand Russell: *Romance*
clarinet Tchaikovsky: *Entr'acte* from
Sylvia Roederer, piano *Sleeping Beauty*
Joan Tower: *Rainwaves*
Bright Sheng: *Reflections, Tibetan*
Dance

26 Thomas Zehetmair Schumann: *String Quartet No. 1*
Quartet Cage: *String Quartet in Four Parts*
Bartok: *String Quartet No. 5*

The Sixty-first Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2435th Concert

THE NEW ZEALAND STRING QUARTET

HELENE POHL, violin **DOUGLAS BEILMAN, violin**
GILLIAN ANSELL, viola **ROLF GJELSTEN, cello**

Sunday Evening, 24 November 2002
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

PROGRAM

Alexander Borodin (1833–1887)	String Quartet No. 2 in D Major (1881)
	Allegro moderato Scherzo: Allegro Notturmo: Andante Finale: Andante; vivace
Zoltán Székely (1903–2001)	String Quartet (1937)
	Moderato ma non troppo Presto Molto moderato Andante sostenuto Largamente, quasi cadenza Presto grazioso, come una danza Allegro appassionato Molto vivace, con brio

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)	String Quartet in E Minor Op. 59, No. 2 (1824)
	Allegro Molto adagio Allegretto Finale: Presto

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Musicians

Acclaimed for its powerful communication, dramatic energy, and unique voice, the **New Zealand String Quartet** has won the hearts of audiences all over the world. With annual tours of North America and Europe and regular visits to Korea, Japan, and Australia, the quartet plays more than seventy-five concerts annually at home and abroad. The New Zealand String Quartet has performed at such renowned North American summer festivals as the Tanglewood, Rutgers Summerfest and Monadnock Music Festival, and at the Mount Gretna, Olympic, and Banff International Festivals. The quartet members, who are dedicated teachers as well as performers, have been artists-in-residence at the Victoria School of Music at the University of Wellington, Canada, since 1991 and are also guest faculty at the Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada. The New Zealand string quartet appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Jonathan Wentworth Associates, Limited, of Mount Vernon, New York, and acknowledges the ongoing support of Montana Wines and Meridian Energy as sponsors of the first violin and viola chairs, respectively. Other sponsors are HSBC Bank, Air New Zealand, the Turnovsky Endowment, the Adam Foundation, and Creative New Zealand. The members of the quartet wear fashions by Blanchet.

Violinist **Helene Pohl** grew up in Ithaca, New York, and spent her childhood on both sides of the Atlantic, as her parents are of German extraction. Having begun her musical studies at the age of four, she was accepted at age seventeen at the Musikhochschule in Cologne, Germany. She later continued her studies with members of the Cleveland Quartet at the Eastman School of Music and with Josef Gingold at Indiana University. She joined the New Zealand String Quartet as first violinist in February 1994.

A native of Kansas, violinist **Douglas Beilman** studied with Dorothy Delay and Hyo Kang at the Juilliard School of Music and the New England Conservatory of Music. He continued his studies with Isadore Tinkleman at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he received the master of music degree. Before joining the New Zealand

String Quartet in 1989, Beilman was first violinist of the Sierra String Quartet, the first resident quartet at the Chamber Music Center at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. A founding member of the twentieth-century music ensemble CadeNZa, Beilman has participated extensively in premiere performances of New Zealand and international compositions.

Violist **Gillian Ansell** began the study of violin and piano at an early age in her hometown of Auckland, New Zealand. At age sixteen she made her concerto debut with the Auckland Symphonia (now known as the Auckland Philharmonia). As a recipient of an Associate Board Scholarship to study violin, viola, and piano, she studied at the Royal College of Music in London, where she won several prizes. After working professionally in London for three years, she returned to New Zealand to become a founding member of the New Zealand String Quartet. In 2001 Gillian Ansell became artistic director, with fellow quartet member Helene Pohl, of the Adam New Zealand Festival of Chamber Music.

Born in Victoria, British Columbia, cellist **Rolf Gjelsten** began his study of the cello at age fifteen under James Hunter and Janos Starker. At age twenty-one he obtained a position with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, becoming its youngest member. He returned to North America to study with Zara Nelsova, which led to further study with the members of the La Salle, Hungarian, Vermeer, Cleveland, and Emerson String Quartets. Gjelsten continued his studies in 1980 at Rutgers University with the eminent Casals protégé Bernhard Greenhouse receiving the doctor of music degree in cello. Gjelsten joined the New Zealand String Quartet in May 1994 and became a New Zealand citizen in 1997.

Program Notes

The *Quartet No. 2 in D Major* by Alexander Borodin was not written, as might be expected, by someone who devoted an entire lifetime to perfecting the art of composition. Borodin was a world-renowned scientist, a chemist by profession, and he held various official positions

that usurped much of his creative time. In addition, he was not only a composer but also a commissioner, philanthropist, artist, and doctor. It was his musical works, however, that made his name for posterity, despite the fact that they are few in number. They include several vocal compositions, an opera, two symphonies, and two string quartets. Of the two string quartets, the later one is the more popular—Broadway composers borrowed one of its themes for the musical *Kismet*. The widely recognized theme comes from the third movement of the quartet (*Notturmo*), which is one of the most famous slow movements in the entire realm of chamber music.

One of Hungary's preeminent violinists, the late Zoltán Székely was a pupil of the celebrated Hungarian violinist Janö Hubay (1858–1937) and a composition student of both Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967) and Béla Bartók (1881–1945) at the Ferenc Liszt Academy in Budapest. In late 1936 Székely entered his *String Quartet* in the Coolidge competition sponsored by the Library of Congress. The work did not win the Coolidge prize, but Székely took the matter in good spirits, claiming later: “If I had won the competition, I might have chosen to become a composer rather than a violinist.” Although written when the composer was thirty-three, the *String Quartet* is a mature work and was the last that he undertook. It is in eight short movements and explores many devices that were modern for its time, including polyrhythms.

The three string quartets that comprise Beethoven's *Opus 59* were commissioned by the Russian count Andreas Razumovsky, ambassador to the Royal Court in Vienna in 1806. Beethoven's models were the paradigmatic string quartets of Haydn. Mozart, following Haydn's example, raised the level of quartet writing to an even higher plane of perfection, and Beethoven, in his *Opus 59*, surpassed the achievements of both Haydn and Mozart to an extent that radiated shock waves among the cognoscenti of the musical world. These quartets enlarged upon the prevailing basic principles of chamber music writing: instrumental range, harmonic distribution, stylistic implication, and thematic indulgence or selection, as well as melodic and rhythmic articulation. Author Joseph de Marliave, in his book *Beethoven's Quartets*, states: “Beethoven's

melodies have practically nothing in common with either the perfectly tuned phrases of Haydn or...Mozart's perfect balance and symmetry." The starkness that emanated from Beethoven's bold adventure would last at least a century. It was the product of Beethoven's "middle period," during which he also produced such masterpieces as the "Waldstein" and "Appassionata" Piano Sonatas (*Opp. 53* and *57*, respectively) and the "Eroica" Symphony, *Op. 55*.

Each of the quartets of *Opus 59* has established and sustained a personal, idiosyncratic voice. In the *String Quartet in E Minor*, two revelatory chords are interjected before the entrance of the first theme, each apparently designed to gain the listeners' attention and at the same time announce the chordal nature of the work. After a dynamic pause, the main theme is introduced at the pianissimo level, using an arpeggiated E minor chord followed by a downward progression of a diminished seventh chord in B major that resolves logically to the tonic key of E minor. Following this opening statement, Beethoven introduces forceful drive through dynamic contrast, rhythmic diversity, chromaticism, and judicious placement of rests and silence. The movement is hypercharged with tension and intrigue and heralds the importance of these two elements in the quartet as a whole.

The tempo marking for the second movement (*Molto adagio*) is enhanced by Beethoven with the statement, *Si tratta questo pezzo con molto di sentimento* (Treat this piece with much feeling). Deeply expressive and shrouded in a chorale-like delivery, the main subject is poignantly decorated with an exhilarating display of charismatic and luxurious sounds. The third movement (*Allegretto*) is a scherzo with a trio, whose melody is a touching Russian folk tune that was also used in Mussorgsky's opera *Boris Godunov* (in the Coronation Scene in Act I).

The finale (*Presto*) is set in a modified sonata-rondo form. The theme begins in the key of C major, followed by a second theme in E minor. This movement has been described as one of Beethoven's great grotesques in the style of Charles Dickens. In place of the customary recapitulation, the developmental tension continues to the very end, prompting Harris Goldsmith to write: "One is left with exhaustion from

the orgiastic excitement." Moreover, in the closing section Beethoven allows no two instruments to play at the same time, leaving an indelible impression in the listener's memory.

Program notes by Elmer Booze

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

Concerts at the National Gallery of Art

Under the direction of George Manos

December 2002 and January 2003

December 1, 8, and 15: The 60th American Music Festival

Presented in honor of the exhibition *Drawing on America's Past: Folk Art, Modernism, and the Index of American Design*

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| 1 | Philip Quint, violinist
David Riley, pianist | Foss: <i>Three American Pieces</i>
Gershwin/Heifetz: Excerpts from
<i>Porgy and Bess</i>
Corigliano: <i>Sonata (1963)</i> |
| 8 | Washington Men's
Camerata
Frank Albinder, music
director | Songs for the Holiday Season by
Conrad Susa and other American
Composers |
| 15 | The American Chamber
Ensemble | Muczynski: <i>Fantasy Trio</i>
Moore: <i>Quintet for Clarinet and
Strings</i>
Schickele: <i>Serenade for Three</i> |