

interest in Oriental philosophy has been an influence on the quartet, with its movement toward stillness and tranquility. The third movement, which is nearly stationary, is the center of the work, says Mr. Cage. The quartet is played without vibrato throughout because, as Mr. Cage explains, 'vibrato is associated with literature that moves towards climaxes, whereas this quartet does not.'"

Written in the span of one month (6 August to 6 September 1934), the *Quartet No. 5* of Béla Bartók was commissioned by the Library of Congress' Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation. The quartet is in five movements, with the three inner movements (slow, fast, slow) flanked by two fast outer movements. What might have been construed as a musical "mid-life crisis" at this time for Bartók was his indecision as to whether he would continue to employ the chromatic or the diatonic concept in his contrapuntal experimentation. It is probable that his predicament stemmed from his deeply committed editorship of two monumental piano editions that he was preparing during this time: Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* and Mozart's *Piano Sonatas*. These works appear to have given him some revelatory concepts for his own compositions, particularly with regard to his string quartets. Composer George Perle had these observations concerning the *Fifth Quartet*: "Tonal organization based on the symmetrical disposition of pitches around a given axis (either a single note or a semitonal dyad), which had played a certain role in the *Fourth Quartet*, is carried much further in this work.... Throughout the work, but especially in the finale, which is a somewhat free and rhapsodic version of the traditional rondo-sonata, there is a constant interplay of chromatic, diatonic, and symmetrical details."

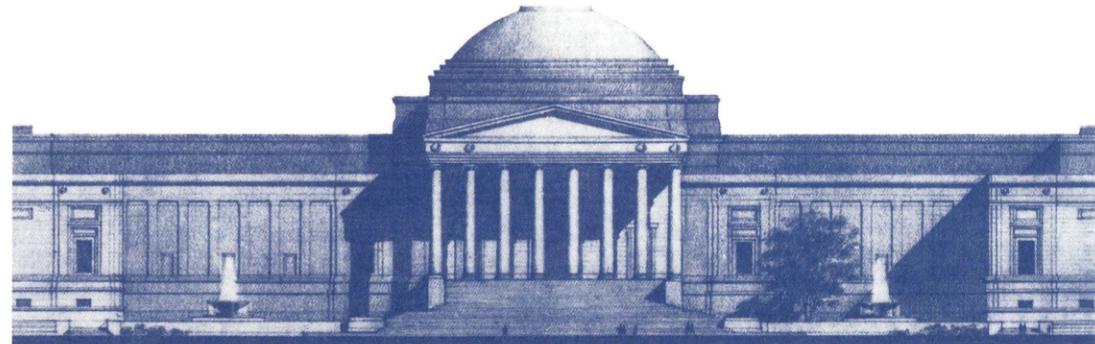
Program notes by Elmer Booze

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

The Sixty-first Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2444th Concert

ZEHETMAIR QUARTET

THOMAS ZEHETMAIR, *violin* MATTHIAS METZGER, *violin*

RUTH KILLIUS, *viola* FRANÇOISE GROBEN, *cello*

Sunday Evening, 26 January 2003

Seven O'clock

West Building, East Garden Court

Admission free

Violist **Ruth Killius** studied with Ulrich Koch and Kim Kashkashian. From 1993 to 1996 she was the principal viola player of the Camerata Bern. She has performed as soloist with the Mozart Sinfonia Concertante and as ensemble musician with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Residentie Orkest in The Hague, the Basel Sinfonie Orchester, and the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century. She regularly plays chamber music with the Ensemble Aventure, Heinz Holliger, and Thomas Demenga. Since 2001 Ruth Killius has held a professorship at the Johannes Gutenberg Universität in Mainz, Germany.

Cellist **Françoise Groben** studied with Boris Pergamenschikow at the Cologne Musikhochschule and subsequently with William Pleeth, Daniel Shaffran, and members of the Amadeus Quartet. In 1990 she won second prize in the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow and was awarded special prizes by the Soviet Artists' Federation and the Moscow Virtuosi. Since then she has received invitations to major festivals and with leading orchestras, including the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, NHK Tokyo, the Leningrad Philharmonic, the Jerusalem Symphony, and the Russian State Orchestra.

Program Notes

It was well known even during their lifetimes that Schumann and Brahms put off writing chamber music until after the death of Beethoven. It was later learned that the specter of hearing Beethoven's footsteps behind him kept Brahms from trying chamber music until after the age of forty. On the other hand, Schumann, who never openly expressed his feeling of being intimidated by the works of Beethoven, seems to have been inspired to turn toward chamber-music writing after his marriage to Clara Wieck. In expanding his horizon into the world of chamber music, Schumann became well acquainted with the quartets of Haydn and Mozart, and intensified his study of the art of contrapuntal writing. The successful outcome of this adventure, coupled with his inherent melodic genius, produced several outstanding works in this genre that include his *Opuses 41, 44, and 47* (three *String Quartets*, the *Piano Quintet*, and the *Piano Quartet*, respectively), all within the year 1842.

Tonight's program features Schumann's first effort in string quartet writing. He dedicated this quartet, as he did the second and third in *Opus 41*, to his colleague and esteemed friend Felix Mendelssohn, who was enamored of Schumann's music. The work is in four movements, with the first movement (*Andante espressivo*) commencing with a premeditated introduction before reaching the main body of the work. The two sections of the movement are distinguished by their respective tempo markings (2/4 and 6/8) and keys (A minor and F major). The second movement (*Scherzo*) is in 6/8, but changes to 4/4 upon reaching the trio section (*Intermezzo*). At the return of the scherzo section, the rhythm reverts to 6/8. The mischievous scherzo's theme is said to belong to a trio by the gifted German composer Heinrich Marschner (1795–1861). The third movement (*Adagio*) is an excellent example of Schumann's gift of melodious song writing as applied to chamber music. The key is F major, but the modulatory sequence within the movement's framework is quite extended. The finale (*Presto*) reestablishes the key of A minor and is constructed under the guidelines of the sonata-allegro form, with guarded liberties.

John Cage's *String Quartet in Four Parts* began its life in Paris, where its first movement was written. Prior to conceiving this work, Cage was involved for some time in composing experimental music for "prepared piano" and for percussion instruments. Upon his return to America, he completed this quartet, revealing once again his artful gift of composing music for traditional instruments. This work was released on a recording entitled *Modern American Music Series*, with the following comment: "[In] the first movement of this four movement work, the composer has attempted to express something of the feeling of life [in Paris], with the suggestions of [Eric] Satie [1866–1925], for whom Mr. Cage has great admiration. The remaining three movements were written in New York City, and in the second movement in particular, the composer believes, there is a consciousness of a return to New York. Mr. Cage further explains that the four movements of the work are, in a sense, like the seasons, the first movement being summer, the second fall, the third winter, and the fourth spring with its evocation of popular street tunes. The composer is conscious of the fact that his