

B-flat Major, K. 458, which radiates a sunny disposition. Its sobriquet, “*The Hunt*,” stems from the horn call used in the opening theme of the first movement (*Allegro vivace assai*). The recurrence of this horn figure throughout the first movement lends it a happy, bucolic atmosphere. The second movement (*Menuetto: Moderato*) has an ABA format, in which a syncopated theme that is rhythmic yet somber (A) precedes and follows a trio (B section) that is rhythmically stable, harmonically delightful, and free-spirited. The lyrical third movement (*Adagio*) has themes that are mellifluous and poignant. Its sensuous disposition presages emotional qualities associated with the romantic era. The finale (*Allegro assai*) has a spontaneous and capricious spirit noted by Walter Cobbett (1847–1937) in his book *Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*: “[The movement has] a Mozartean roguishness and Haydnesque humor.”

Antonin Dvořák’s *Waltzes, Op. 54*, contained eight waltzes for solo piano when completed in 1880. Due to their rhythmic complexity, these waltzes do not lend themselves to dancing, but are suited instead to the concert stage. Dvořák, who was quite enamored with them, almost immediately arranged the first and fourth of the set for string quartet. The manuscript copies of these two compositions in a new genre were circulated widely among amateur groups while Dvořák was alive, but the printed scores did not become available until 1911, seven years after his death. Dvořák liked the waltzes so much that he arranged them for string orchestra and included them in a concert he conducted in March 1880 at the National Theater in Prague.

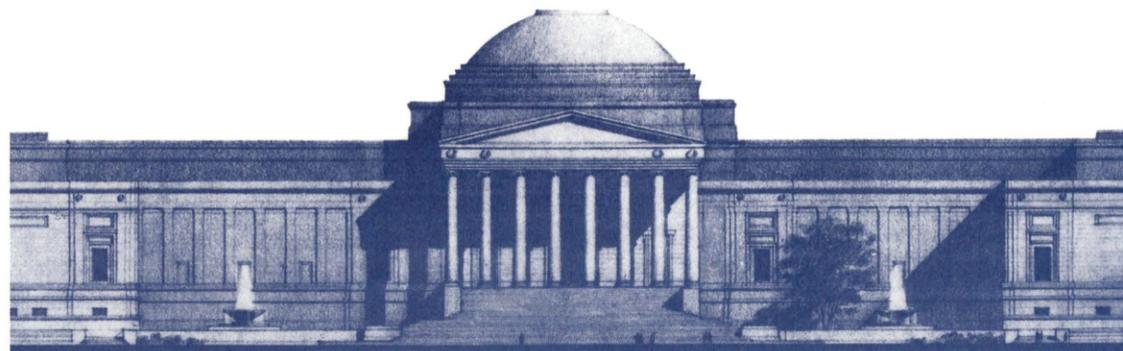
The Russian melodies found in Beethoven’s *String Quartet in C Major, Op. 59, No. 3*, not only recall themes used in the second quartet from the same opus, but also salute the patron to whom all three “*Rasumovsky*” *Quartets* are dedicated. Andreas Kyrillovich Rasumovsky (1752–1836) was the Russian ambassador to the Habsburg imperial court when Beethoven lived and worked in Vienna. The ambassador recognized the uniqueness of Beethoven’s music and frequently hosted musicales in which it featured prominently. The quartet has a nickname, “*Heroic*,” which refers to the ceremoniously bold presentation of the opening movement’s second theme. That theme is very close to Beethoven’s fourth and fifth symphonies in spirit and summarizes the overall experience of the “*Rasumovsky*” *Quartets*, which in turn encapsulate the ideas and emotions of their time.

Programs notes by Elmer Booze

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GÉZA NÉMETH, viola **LÁSZLÓ MEZŐ, cello**

Sunday Evening, 21 March 2004
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

