



The Sixty-third Season of  
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin  
**Concerts**

National Gallery of Art  
2,519th Concert

Cyrus Forough, *violinist*  
Stephen Ackert, *pianist*

16 January 2005  
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm  
West Building, West Garden Court

*Admission free*

Music Department  
National Gallery of Art  
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC

*Mailing address*  
2000B South Club Drive  
Landover, MD 20785

[www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov)

For the convenience of concertgoers  
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

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.

Please note that late entry or reentry after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

2,519th Concert  
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Jean-Marie Leclair (1697–1764)

*Sonata for violin and piano in D Major (Tambourin)* (1723)

Adagio molto maestoso

Allegro

Sarabanda: Largo

Tambourin: Allegro vivace

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

*Sonata No. 2 in A Major* for violin and keyboard instrument

BWV 1015 (1717–1723)

Dolce

Allegro

Andante un poco

Presto

Alan Fletcher

*Study (Woman Holding a Balance)* (2004)

World premiere performance

INTERMISSION

Johann Sebastian Bach

*Partita No. 2 in D minor* for violin solo

BWV 1004 (1720)

Allemanda

Corrente

Sarabanda

Giga

Ciaccona

Camille Saint-Saëns

*Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso*, op. 28 (1863)

## The Musicians

A former pupil of Arthur Grumiaux, David Oistrakh, and Josef Gingold, violinist Cyrus Forough is a laureate of the Tchaikovsky International Competition, first prize winner of the Milwaukee Symphony Violin Competition, and winner of the United States Information Agency's National Violin and Piano Duo Competition with his wife, pianist Carolyn McCracken. Representing the United States as artistic ambassadors, the Forough/McCracken Duo concertized and gave master classes in the Far East and throughout South America. Forough's recital and orchestra appearances throughout eastern and western Europe, Russia, and the Middle East have received unanimous praise from both the critics and the public. He has performed with the Milwaukee Symphony, the Alabama Symphony, and the Belgian National Radio Orchestra, and his live and recorded performances have been broadcast on radio and television on four continents.

Cyrus Forough is a professor of violin at both Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh and Roosevelt University's College of Performing Arts in Chicago. He is much in demand as a pedagogue and among his students counts prizewinners in many national and international competitions, as well as members of the Chicago Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, the New World Symphony, and the symphony orchestras of Calgary, Houston, and Milwaukee, among others. During the summer of 2005, Forough will join the faculties of the Académie Internationale de Musique de Montpellier in France and the Beverly Hills International Chamber Music Festival and Master Classes in Los Angeles.

A graduate of Oberlin College, Northwestern University, and the University of Wisconsin, Stephen Ackert studied organ and harpsichord as a Fulbright scholar in Frankfurt, Germany, where his teachers were Helmut Walcha and Maria Jaeger-Jung. From 1974 to 1978 he served as a specialist in Western music for the National Iranian Radio and Television Network in Tehran. He also served as manager and musical director of the network's resident chamber orchestra. Since January 2004, Ackert has been head of the music department at the National Gallery of Art. In addition to administering the Gallery's weekly concerts, he presents lectures and lecture-recitals on subjects that bring together the visual arts and music. Ackert has taught applied organ and piano, choral music, music appreciation, and music theory to junior and senior high school and undergraduate students. He is currently a member of the adjunct music faculty of the Northern Virginia Community College in Alexandria, Virginia.

## Program Notes

Jean-Marie Leclair was the eldest of eight children of Antoine Leclair, a French lacemaker and cellist who was professionally active between 1695 and 1720, and his wife, Benoîte Ferrier. Six of the children had notable careers as violinists and composers, but Jean-Marie (precisely identified as “*l'aîné*” to distinguish him from his younger brother, whose full name also included both the names Jean and Marie) was the most influential of the six, and was credited by subsequent generations of violinists as the founder of the French violin school. His numerous sonatas for violin and keyboard instrument fuse the Italian model, as established by Archangelo Corelli (1653–1713), with French dance forms as they are found in the music of Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687), Marin Marais (1656–1728), and other French baroque sources. From Italian sonatas he adopted the sequence of four movements, slow–fast–slow–fast, and the propensity for lyrical melodies made up of short phrases. From the French tradition he inherited the *détaché* bowing technique and frequent use of dotted rhythms. Leclair made more demands on the violinist than either his Italian or French forebears: for the left hand, there are excursions into third and fourth positions, multiple stops, double trills, and tremolo effects. From the right hand and bow arm, his music demands tied-bow staccatos and rapid crossings from one string to another. The title of the last movement (*Tambourin*) refers to a Provençal folk dance performed on the fife and drum, which are imitated by the violin and the keyboard instrument, respectively.

Johann Sebastian Bach composed his six sonatas for violin and keyboard instrument and six sonatas and partitas for solo violin at a time when his creative focus was directed almost exclusively toward instrumental music. Between 1717 and 1723 he served as kapellmeister and director of chamber

music at the court of Duke Leopold of Anhalt-Coethen, an informed music lover. The duke provided his court composer with an orchestra of highly skilled instrumentalists who provided the incentive for Bach's remarkable sonatas, partitas, and suites for violin and cello as well as numerous concerti for solo instruments and orchestra.

The sonatas belong to a tradition that began in the late 1600s and reached its full development in the works of Archangelo Corelli, who firmly established the archetypal four-movement structure, the repeat patterns, and the key relationships that defined the genre until the generation after Johann Sebastian Bach. Bach's *Sonata in A Major* differs from those of his earlier contemporaries in that he wrote out both the bass and treble parts for the keyboard player. (Earlier baroque sonatas were scored for solo instrument and basso continuo, in which case the keyboard player had to improvise the harmonies from a given bass line.) The master composer's brilliant ideas for imitative counterpoint between the instruments demanded to be written down and performed repeatedly. Of special note is the canon between the violin and the treble keyboard voice in the third movement of the sonata (*Andante un poco*).

A fine violinist in his own right, Bach had a deep appreciation for the technical and expressive potential of the instrument and was aware of the "trade secrets" of the string players' world. In his solo sonatas and partitas, he calls upon the performer to activate more than one string at once, arpeggiate large chords, and continue melodic lines across numerous rests. The resulting multiple linear strands make possible the presentation of fugues, canons, and other forms of contrapuntal imitation on an instrument with only four strings. The *Partita in D Minor* is distinguished by its last move-

ment, a chaconne of gargantuan proportions and potency. This movement sets a benchmark for both the chaconne and its close relative, the passacaglia, to which other composers—among them Franz Liszt, Max Reger, Maurice Ravel, Paul Hindemith, Benjamin Britten, and Gyorgy Ligeti—have aspired but never equaled.

Commissioned by the National Gallery of Art and presented for the first time in this recital, Alan Fletcher's *Study (Woman Holding a Balance)* is inspired by the eponymous painting by Johannes Vermeer in the Gallery's permanent collection. The gently flowing musical lines presented in intricate counterpoint in the first half of the work reflect the quiet repose and delicate texture of Vermeer's genre painting. The composer presents the performers with a task not unlike that of the woman in the painting, as she carefully manipulates her jewels and weights in an effort not to upset the balance. He requires the musicians to perform as many as three different subdivisions of the beat at the same time in a pattern that shifts rapidly among pairs, triplets, quadruplets, quintuplets, and sextuplets. They must present this complexity without losing track of the basic pulse or disturbing the even texture, the musical equivalent of upsetting the balance. In the second half of the piece, the composer presents a recitative in which a soaring reverie on the violin is accompanied by simple chords on the piano. Just before the piece comes to a close, the roles of the instruments are reversed from those they had at the outset, with the violin now providing the rhythmically complex arpeggios and the piano echoing the melody in octaves with which the violin began.

Alan Fletcher is professor of composition and head of the School of Music at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh. He studied composition with Edward T. Cone, Paul Lansky, and Milton Babbitt at Princeton University and Roger Sessions at the Juilliard School of Music; his piano teachers were Robert Helps and Jacob Lateiner. He earned the bachelor of arts degree at

Princeton and the master of arts and doctor of musical arts degrees at Juilliard as a Danforth graduate fellow. While at Juilliard, Fletcher received the Irving Berlin Fellowship and the Alexandre Gretchaninoff Prize. He also attended the Institute for Educational Management at Harvard's Graduate School of Education and has been a frequent fellow at the MacDowell Colony. During his student years Fletcher spent time in Washington as an intern on Capitol Hill. During frequent visits to the National Gallery on his way to and from the Hill, he often stopped to contemplate Vermeer's *Woman Holding a Balance*, a painting that has always held special fascination for him.

Alan Fletcher has composed more than seventy works in all traditional classical forms. His *Piano Sonata*, written for Sergey Schepkin and commissioned by the FleetBoston Celebrity Series, was selected by Richard Dyer of *The Boston Globe* as one of the best new works of 1996. *I Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing*, also commissioned by the Celebrity Series, was chosen as one of the best new works of 2001. *An American Song* for wind ensemble won a national competition in 2000 to honor the United States Military Academy at West Point in its bicentennial year. Fletcher's music is recorded on Albany Records and published by Boosey & Hawkes.

Camille Saint-Saëns was inspired to write two works for violin and piano after hearing the 1859 debut performance in Paris of the virtuoso violinist Pablo de Sarasate (1844–1908). Saint-Saëns composed his first violin concerto that same year, following it in 1863 with the *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso*, also dedicated to Sarasate. Both the brilliance and willful exoticism of the latter work reflect the impression Sarasate left on his listeners—among them a contemporary music critic, who wrote, “Even now he is a complete virtuoso, combining purity, justness, and energy of tone with exquisite feeling and pervasive charm.”