

Program notes

Ravel seemed to recall his classical training at the Paris Conservatoire as he fashioned the first movement of his *Sonata for Violin and Piano*. There is a clear presentation of a first and second subject, but when the latter subject appears, the composer brings the listener sharply up to date with parallel diminished octaves and open fifths and a sparsely modern texture in both instruments. The second movement (*Blues*), obviously influenced by American jazz, calls upon the violinist to imitate the soft, slithering lines that are the trademark of the jazz saxophonist. The third movement (*Perpetuum mobile*) starts modestly, but evolves into a challenging perpetual motion etude in sixteenth notes for the violin as the movement progresses.

Gaspar Cassadó was the leading student of fellow Catalonian Pablo Casals and studied composition with Maurice Ravel and Manuel de Falla. Cassadó enjoyed a thriving career in the 1920s and 1930s, but his reputation suffered enormously after World War II, when Casals accused him of having collaborated with the fascist government of Italy, where Cassadó had lived during the conflict. Casals' largely unsubstantiated attack had a devastating impact on their friendship and on Cassadó's career. He continued to compose and arrange music for cello as well as orchestral and chamber works, but was rarely seen or heard in public. He was also an inventor of cello-related gadgets and an excellent pianist.

Although less well known than his first piano trio, Mendelssohn's *Trio* op. 66 is every bit its equal in musical interest. In addition to the overriding vocal character of the main themes, there are a number of other Mendelssohn trademarks in this work. The delicacy of the scherzo is reminiscent of the overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the solemn chorale that interrupts the final movement revives a technique Mendelssohn had used to great effect in the last movement of his *Reformation Symphony*. In the final movement of the trio, the chorale enters reservedly and gradually combines with the first theme to ascend to a grand climax.

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

National Gallery of Art

2,526th Concert

The Washington Chamber Players

Claudia Chudacoff, violin

Nathaniel Chaitkin, cello

Marie-France Lefebvre, piano

March 6, 2005

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

The National Gallery extends its thanks to the Washington Chamber Players, who agreed on thirty-six hours' notice to replace the Takács String Quartet. The quartet was obliged to cancel its appearance due to the sudden illness of one of its members.

Program

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Sonata for Violin and Piano (1923–1927)

Allegretto

Blues: Moderato

Perpetuum mobile

Gaspar Cassadó (1897–1966)

Sonata for Cello and Piano

Rapsodia (Lento ma non troppo-Allegro)

Aragonesa (Presto ma non troppo)

Saeta (Grave)

Paso-doble (Allegro)

Intermission

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

Trio No. 2 in C Minor, op. 66 (1845)

Allegro energico e con fuoco

Andante espressivo

Scherzo: Molto allegro quasi presto

Finale: Allegro appassionato

The Musicians

Violinist Claudia Chudacoff appears frequently as soloist and chamber musician throughout the Washington/Baltimore area. She is a member of both the National Gallery Chamber Players String Quartet and the Sunrise Quartet, and has performed regularly on the Holocaust Memorial Museum Chamber Series since 1995. She is featured on a CD of chamber music of Erich Korngold, released by Albany Records. In addition to her position as assistant concertmaster of the “President’s Own” United States Marine Chamber Orchestra, Chudacoff is the concertmaster of the

National Gallery Orchestra. Prior to moving to Washington, DC, she was the assistant concertmaster of the Louisville Orchestra. She received the master and bachelor of music degrees from the Eastman School of Music, where her principal teachers were Sylvia Rosenberg and Zvi Zeitlin.

Born and raised in New York City, cellist Nathaniel Chaitkin graduated from the Pre-College Division of the Juilliard School, where he studied with Ardyth Alton. He continued his studies at the University of Michigan, where his teachers were Jeffrey Solow, Nina deVeritch, and Erling Blöndal Bengtsson. He received the doctor of music degree from the University of Maryland, studying with Evelyn Elsing and David Soyer. Chaitkin is currently a member of the “President’s Own” United States Marine Chamber Orchestra and has appeared frequently as soloist with that ensemble as well as the Fairfax and Alexandria symphonies. Currently on the faculty of Georgetown University, as of September 2005 he will become assistant professor and director of chamber music at Michigan State University in East Lansing.

French-Canadian pianist Marie-France Lefebvre was appointed assistant professor of piano at Michigan State University in 2004. From 1992 to 2004, she served as diction coach, prompter, and rehearsal pianist for the Washington Opera and taught at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. She has also worked professionally with the Santa Fe Opera, the Michigan Opera Theater, the Wolf Trap Opera, and the Aspen Music Festival. Lefebvre has served as director of the song integration program at the Banff Centre for the Arts and has taught at the University of Maryland. She concertizes regularly with her husband, cellist Nathaniel Chaitkin, and they have broadcast recitals on Radio Canada and recorded for CRI. She has also collaborated with Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Harolyn Blackwell, Denyce Graves, and Samuel Ramey. Lefebvre holds the doctor of musical arts degree from the University of Michigan, where she studied with Martin Katz and Arthur Greene, and the master of music degree from the Manhattan School of Music.