

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 of
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

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

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COVER: Autograph score of Mozart's *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*
in A Major, K. 219, in the Gertrude Clarke Whittall Foundation Collection,
Music Division, Library of Congress. Used by permission.



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

National Gallery of Art
2,558th Concert

The Mozart Piano Quartet

Paul Rivinius, *piano*
Mark Gothoni, *violin*
Hartmut Rohde, *viola*
Peter Hoerr, *violoncello*

February 5, 2006
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Piano Quartet in G Minor, K. 478 (1785)

Allegro

Andante

Rondo: Allegro

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, op. 16 (1796)

Grave; allegro ma non troppo

Andante cantabile

Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo

INTERMISSION

Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, op. 47 (1842)

Sostenuto assai; allegro ma non troppo

Scherzo: Molto vivace

Andante cantabile

Finale: Vivace

The Musicians

The Mozart Piano Quartet brings together musicians who share a common dedication to exploring the rhetorical nature of music and discovering the magical sounds and colors of the romantic chamber music repertoire. Founded in 1994, the quartet has appeared at the Bach Festival in Bern, Switzerland; the Barossa Music Festival in Angaston, Australia; the Mahler Festival in Tirol, Austria; the Kurt Weill Festival in Dessau, Germany; and the Melbourne Festival. The Mozart Piano Quartet has also been the ensemble-in-residence at the Festival for Romantic Chamber Music in Leipzig and Halle, Germany. A *Sydney Herald* critic, who attended their concert at the Sydney Opera House, noted the ensemble's "utter clarity" and the "unanimity of their approach to music-making." The group has played in numerous concert series and renowned venues across the United States, including that of the Chamber Music Society of Chicago, the Da Camera Society of Los Angeles, the Pro Musica Society of Montreal, the Frick Collection in New York, and Shriver Hall in Baltimore.

The Mozart Piano Quartet records frequently for major German radio stations and in 2000 made the first-ever recording of the complete chamber music of Gustav Uwe Jenner (1865–1920), a pupil of Johannes Brahms. The quartet's archive of recordings includes works by Brahms, Dvořák, Mozart, Schumann, and Strauss for the CPO, Arte Nova, and MDG labels.

Program Notes

Music lovers all over the world are celebrating the 250th anniversary of the birth of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (January 27, 1756–December 5, 1791), baptized Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus but always known by the shorter name. Son of the famous violinist and composer Leopold Mozart (1719–1787), Wolfgang Amadeus produced an extraordinary number of glorious pieces of music in his short life. Although he died at only thirty-five, he had been a child prodigy who composed his first piano work at age five, a choral setting of a psalm at age nine, and an opera (*La finta semplice*, K. 51) at age twelve.

Mozart's reputation as a composer and pianist was at its peak by 1785, the year in which he composed his *Piano Quartet in G Minor*, K. 478. He typically poured himself into his work, as this letter to his sister Maria Anna (1751–1829) attests: "At six o'clock in the morning, I am already done with my *friseur*, and at seven I am fully dressed. At that point, I compose until nine o'clock. From nine to one, I give lessons; then I eat. . . I cannot work before five or six o'clock in the evening and am often even then prevented by a concert; if not, I write until nine. Then I go to my dear Constanze, where the delight of our meeting is generally embittered by the words of her mother. . . . At half after ten or eleven, I am again at home. Since I cannot depend on having time for composition in the evening, I am in the habit of writing something before I go to bed. Frequently I forget myself and write 'til one o'clock—then, up again at six." In the course of that one year, 1785, all this feverish activity resulted in the creation of not only the piano quartet, but also a cantata, a funeral piece, several songs and choruses, a piano concerto, and the opera *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Beethoven's *Piano Quartet in E-flat Major*, op. 16, dates from 1796, by which time he was well acquainted with Mozart's chamber music, particularly the *Piano Quartet* K. 478, which appears to have inspired several aspects of Beethoven's piano quartet. Beethoven originally wrote his opus 16 as a quintet for piano and four wind instruments but revised it almost immediately for piano and strings, recognizing the increased sales potential of music for string players, who were much more numerous than wind players in eighteenth-century Vienna. Throughout the quartet Beethoven utilizes *concertante* style, in which the piano and the strings are usually juxtaposed and only occasionally blended. In the opening *Grave* section, piano solos alternate with the string chorus, after which the two colors are mingled briefly. The remainder of the first movement (*allegro ma non troppo*) is a spirited waltz. Beethoven frequently acknowledged his deep musical debt to Mozart; here the *adagio* of the slow movement can be seen as a revival of the earlier composer's practice. (Beethoven was wont to mark his slow movements *andante*, with the expectation of a slower tempo.) Another nod in the direction of Mozart's piano quartets is the use of the rondo form in the finale. Here, as in the first movement, Beethoven shines the spotlight on the piano as a solo instrument and reserves the combination of piano and strings for the recurring rondo.

The *Piano Quartet in E-flat Major*, op. 47, is universally acknowledged as one of Schumann's masterworks, ranking in importance with the best piano quartets of Mozart, Brahms, and Fauré. It was the last in a series of five remarkable chamber works that Schumann produced in a period of just five months. The quartet is unified by a device known as thematic transference, whereby an entire theme or a generous portion of it reappears in a later movement. The first and second movements are linked in this way. The third movement (*Andante cantabile*) has a number of unique and fascinating details, including syncopation and arabesques. Schumann provides additional interest by requiring the cellist to retune the lowest string of the instrument for this movement, so that he or she can sustain a low B-flat

for twelve measures. As the third movement draws to a close, Schumann employs another unifying device: foreshadowing. Descending fifths and running scales point ahead to the salient features of the fugal passage that begins the finale (*Vivace*). The exciting mélange of short fugues and lush melodies in this final movement appears to be an exercise in romantic disorder, but it is in fact tightly knit. This work can be said to take up where Mozart and Beethoven left off, and it provides a fitting climax to an evening of chamber music of the first order.