

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

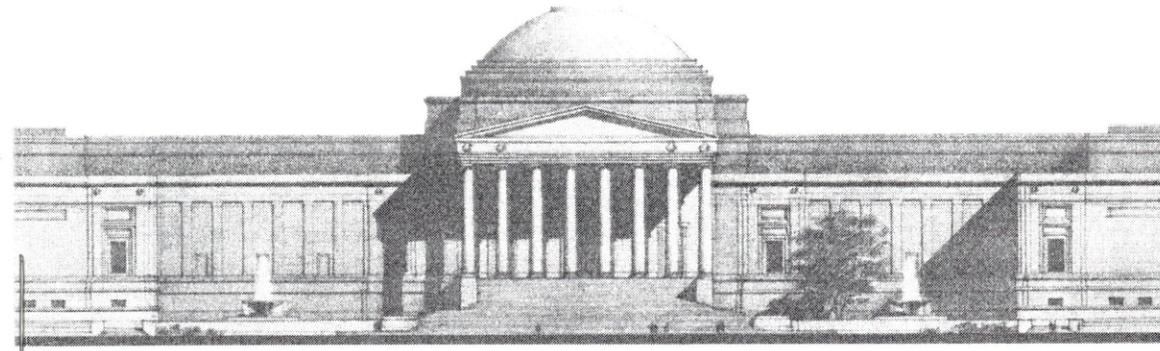
The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

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

Mailing address
2000B South Club Drive
Landover, MD 20785

www.nga.gov



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

National Gallery of Art

2,652nd Concert

[2,653rd Concert]

New York Chamber Soloists

Jennifer Grim, *flute*

Melvin Kaplan, *oboe*

Allen Blustine, *clarinet*

Curtis Macomber, *violin*

Ynez Lynch, *viola and narration*

Adam Grabois, *cello*

Elizabeth Metcalfe, *piano and harpsichord*

January 6, 2008

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)

Concerto in G Minor for Flute, Oboe, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Harpsichord

Allegro ma cantabile

Largo

Allegro molto

Elliot Carter (b. 1908)

Esprit rude/Esprit doux (1985)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, K. 493 (1786)

Allegro

Larghetto

Allegretto

INTERMISSION

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)

Caprice on Danish and Russian Airs, op. 79 (1887)

Gerald Fried (b. 1928)

The Chess Game

For narrator, flute, oboe, violin, cello, and piano

Inspired by *Alice in Wonderland*

The Musicians

Acclaimed as an outstanding ensemble of distinguished virtuosi, performing widely diverse repertoire in creatively programmed concerts, the New York Chamber Soloists have maintained a unique niche in the chamber music world for five decades. This twelve-member ensemble of strings, winds, and keyboard can increase to as many as twenty with the addition of guest artists, giving it the flexibility to offer many works that are seldom heard due to the unusual instrumental combinations for which they were written.

With more than 250 works in their repertoire, the Chamber Soloists have made a valuable contribution to the musical life of this country, and have helped to expand the audience for chamber music. Their programming innovations have included Bach's complete *Brandenburg Concerti* in a single concert; an American classics program; the complete Mozart horn concerti; song cycles, cantatas, and operas from Monteverdi to Aitken; and "Paris in the '20s."

They have added substantially to the catalog of twentieth-century chamber works, with compositions written for them by Mario Davidovsky, Ezra Laderman, Mel Powell, Gunther Schuller, and twenty-one other contemporary composers. Most recently, the group has commissioned a new work for children, *Ferdinand the Bull*, from noted American composer Hugh Aitken.

The ensemble has compiled an impressive record of repeat engagements in North America and abroad, including eleven European tours, six Latin American tours, and numerous tours of the Far East and South Pacific. In New York City, the Chamber Soloists have appeared frequently at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Lincoln Center. In addition to the National Gallery, the Chamber Soloists have performed locally at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Library of Congress, and the National Academy of Sciences. They are frequent guests at major universities across the country and at the Caramoor, Mostly Mozart, Sun Valley, and Vermont Mozart festivals.

Program Notes

Even in an age of prolific composers, Antonio Vivaldi's musical outpouring is astonishing, especially considering that a good deal of it has been lost. His known output includes some five hundred concerti, more than fifty operas, and seventy sonatas as well as numerous arias, sacred and secular cantatas, and sinfonias. As a pioneer of orchestral music, his expressive lyricism and dramatic content distinguished him from his predecessors, and he was greatly admired throughout Europe during his lifetime.

Vivaldi's operatic and religious works display his mastery of those forms, but the composer is best remembered for his instrumental concerti, the majority of which were composed for the academy orchestra at the Pietà, a school for orphaned girls where he taught music. In his concerti for solo instruments, Vivaldi introduced the musical device of placing the soloist and the orchestra in contrast with each other, creating a dialogue that is essentially developmental, with progressive dramatic interest provided by an increment of arpeggios, swift scales, and tremoli in the solo part. One of his most successful instrumental combinations was the double concerto for flute, oboe, strings, and harpsichord, and he wrote at least eight such works. Like many baroque composers, Vivaldi borrowed from himself; the slow movement (*Largo*) also appears in a double concerto for oboe, violin, and orchestra.

New York City native Elliot Carter is acknowledged as one of the United States' most important composers, educators, and writers on music. In his illustrious career he has been awarded grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Institute of Arts and Letters (of which he has been a member since 1971), and prizes such as the Prix de Rome and the Sibelius Award. His second and third string quartets were each awarded a Pulitzer Prize, and he has been granted honorary doctorate degrees from Harvard, Princeton, and Yale universities. In 1977 Carter's critical writings were published under the title *The Writings of Elliot Carter: an American Composer Looks at Music*.

In *Esprit rude/Esprit doux*, Carter whimsically makes use of arcane and eclectic sources for his musical inspiration. Composed in 1985 in honor of the sixtieth birthday of the celebrated conductor and composer Pierre

Boulez, the work uses the German and French note names for which there are pitch equivalents. Carter extracted a musical motto based on his French colleague's last name, as follows: B (B-flat in German), (O, no equivalent), U (ut or c), L (la or a in French), E, Z, (no equivalent). The motto therefore consists of the pitches b-flat—c—a—e; the piece begins and ends with this musical theme, shared cooperatively between the flute and the clarinet.

The non-musical inspiration does not stop there. Carter goes a step further, translating "sixtieth birthday" into Greek. The two words, transliterated as "hexekostan ekos" both begin with the Greek letter "epsilon." They are, however, pronounced differently, the first with an H sound, the other with an E sound. The title, *Esprit rude/Esprit doux*, which the composer translates as "rough breathing/ smooth breathing" refers to the "rough" pronunciation of the first word, and the "smooth" pronunciation of the second one. Accordingly, the impulses of roughness and smoothness find their way into the construction of the music: jerky, active rhythmic lines ("rough breathing") alternate or are juxtaposed with gently flowing legato line ("smooth breathing").

The dark, dramatic opening phrase of Mozart's *Piano Quartet in E-flat Major*, K. 493, is scant preparation for the several delightful motifs that the composer introduces to round out the first subject. The second theme, stated by the piano after two powerful chords, has a single melodic strain that subsequently dominates the development section, appearing about twenty times in various keys, instrumental combinations, dynamics, and musical meanings. The final coda features a tight, fugal reworking of the familiar second-theme motto. The second movement (*Larghetto*) is distinguished by immediate echoes of almost every phrase—sometimes in exact repetition, sometimes elaborated or modified in some way. The overall feeling is wistful and tender, but with strong hints of great inner tension. The final movement (*Allegretto*) has a memorable opening theme that Mozart biographer Alfred Einstein (1880–1952) enthusiastically called "the purest, most childlike and godlike melody ever sung." The movement is structured in a combined rondo and sonata form with the first theme followed by a second rather militant theme that soon relaxes into a more

lyrical mood, as Mozart brings in additional motifs. After a brief section featuring virtuosic runs for the piano that can be considered the development, the second and first themes return, and the work concludes with a short coda.

Camille Saint-Saëns began studying piano at age two-and-a-half and was composing by age five. Eight years later he entered the Paris Conservatory, and at twenty-two was organist at one of the great churches of Paris, La Madeleine, where his playing won the admiration of Franz Liszt, Anton Rubenstein, and Clara Schumann, among many others. He toured widely as both a pianist and a conductor and his compositions were extremely popular, winning numerous important prizes in his own lifetime. Saint-Saëns wrote many pieces for winds and piano, among them the *Caprice on Danish and Russian Airs*. In typical French fashion, it employs all the colors available from the four instruments involved in a delicious flight of fancy.

Emmy Award-winner and Oscar-nominee Gerald Fried is a prolific composer and a respected performer. Over a forty-year career in films and television, he composed the musical scores for *Gilligan's Island*, *Roots*, *Star Trek*, and *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* as well as for Stanley Kubrick's first five films, for which he both composed and conducted the music. Since his retirement from film composition in the early 1990s, Fried has focused on music for the theater, and is currently working on a full-length music theater piece, *Morningtime Train*. He has also composed four symphonies and three operas, most recently *Rock of Angels*. His music is distinguished by unusual string and brass and the inclusion of rarely-used instruments, such as the harpsichord. Fried's *The Chess Game* is the first of three works commissioned by the New York Chamber Soloists and the Argosy Foundation to be performed with spoken excerpts from Lewis Carroll's (1832–1898) *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. It was premiered at the Vermont Mozart Festival in 2006.

*Notes on Carter, Fried, Saint-Saëns, and Vivaldi provided by the
New York Chamber Soloists*

Next Week at the National Gallery

Vilnius String Quartet

Music by Beethoven, Brahms, and Narbutaite

January 13, 2008

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court