

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

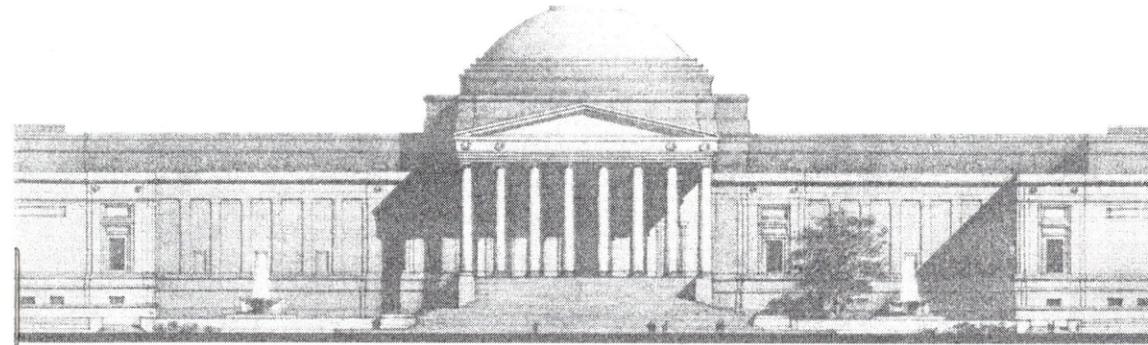
The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

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

National Gallery of Art
2,659th Concert

Juilliard String Quartet

Joel Smirnoff and Ronald Copes, *violin*
Samuel Rhodes, *viola*
Joel Krosnick, *cello*

February 17, 2008
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

String Quartet in E Minor, op. 68 (1873)

Allegro

Andantino

Prestissimo

Scherzo fuga: Allegro assai mosso

Elliot Carter (b. 1908)

String Quartet no. 2 (1959)

Introduction

Allegro fantastico; cadenza for viola

Presto scherzando; cadenza for cello

Andante espressivo; cadenza for violin

Allegro

Conclusion

(Played without pauses between movements)

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1828)

String Quartet in C Major, op. 59, no. 3 (1806)

Andante con moto; allegro vivace

Andante con moto quasi allegretto

Menuetto: Grazioso

Allegro molto

The Musicians

The Juilliard String Quartet enjoys international renown, and has been recognized for much of its sixty-one-year history as the quintessential American string quartet. Composer and music educator William Schuman (1910–1992), who was president of the Juilliard School of music from 1945 to 1962, considered the establishment of the school's resident string quartet in 1946 as one of the great achievements of his tenure. This concert marks the third time that this famous ensemble has performed at the National Gallery. Its first Gallery concert in 1949 featured the original quartet members: violinists Robert Mann and Robert Koff, violist Ralph Hillyer, and cellist Arthur Winograd. Not long thereafter, the Juilliard Quartet established residency at the Library of Congress, which was the only venue at which it could be heard in Washington for many years. In 1991 the ensemble made an exception to that rule and returned to the Gallery to participate in its fiftieth anniversary concert season. On that occasion, Mann was still the first violinist, and his colleagues were the players who remain members of the quartet to this day—Joel Smirnoff on second violin, Samuel Rhodes on viola, and Joel Krosnick on cello.

In the 2007–2008 season, the quartet offers special programming in recognition of the centenary of Elliott Carter, a composer with whom it has had a long and remarkable relationship. An ardent advocate of Carter's complex and visionary works, the Juilliard made a landmark recording of his first four string quartets, which was released by Sony in 1991. This season the ensemble performs his *String Quartet no. 2* and partakes in celebrations of his work at the Ravinia Festival in Illinois. In addition to this evening's concert, the Quartet will perform in California, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. The season also includes an extensive Juilliard Quartet tour across Europe, with stops in The Netherlands and Paris, and a return engagement to Japan's Miyazaki Festival.

As quartet-in-residence at the Juilliard School of Music in New York City, the ensemble is widely admired for its seminal influence on aspiring string players around the world. It was instrumental in the formation of the Alexander, American, Brentano, Colorado, Concord, Emerson, Lark, La Salle, Mendelssohn, New World, Saint Lawrence, and Tokyo string quartets. It has performed a comprehensive repertoire of some 500 works and has premiered more than sixty compositions by American composers. In 2006 the Quartet played the world premiere of Ezequiel Viñao's *Quartet II, "The Loss and the Silence,"* commissioned by the Juilliard School in honor of its centennial.

The ensemble has been associated with Sony Classical since 1949. With more than 100 releases to its credit, the Juilliard is one of the most widely recorded string quartets of our time and has received numerous awards from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences and many European institutions.

The Quartet members are annual guests at the Tanglewood Music Festival and frequent guests at the Lucerne, Miyazaki, and Schubertiade festivals. They are all American-born and received their musical training in the United States. Violinist Joel Smirnoff has been a member since 1986. He is chair of the violin department at the Juilliard School and pursues an active career as a conductor. In 1997 violinist Ronald Copes joined the ensemble as second violinist and was appointed to the violin faculty at Juilliard. He appears in solo recitals across the United States and in Europe. Violist Samuel Rhodes, who has been with the quartet since 1969, is also an active recital and orchestral soloist. He is a composer and chair of the viola department at the Juilliard School. Joel Krosnick, cellist of the Juilliard String Quartet since 1974, performs regularly with pianist Gilbert Kalish, his sonata partner of over twenty years. Krosnick has been chair of the cello department at Juilliard since 1994.

Program notes

It is interesting to conjecture whether Giuseppe Verdi might not have written a string quartet at all, had he not encountered a peculiar set of circumstances while in Naples in 1872. A staging of *Aida* in that city was postponed due to the illness of several singers, and Verdi had a great deal of time on his hands. He used it to write his one and only string quartet, which was first performed on April 1, 1873, at a party in his hotel suite. The first movement opens with the second violin setting forth a dramatic theme, which is taken up by the first violin. A subdued, contemplative second subject appears in the cello. To the second movement tempo marking—*Andantino*—Verdi adds *con eleganza* (with elegance), and he gives the cello an elegant aria to sing. The finale, marked *Scherzo fuga*, features high-spirited writing that drives the music to an exciting conclusion.

In the twentieth century, American composers emerged as major creative talents on the world stage. Elliot Carter, who celebrates his 100th birthday this year, is undoubtedly the master among American composers of the last century. In his long life, Carter has composed in every musical genre, turning eventually to opera (his first opera, *What Next?*, had its premiere in December 2007 in New York). He wrote eight string quartets, though he withdrew the first three from publication. In the second of his published string quartets, Carter gives each instrument its own musical personality and characteristic style. Because of the total independence of the individual parts, the composer first thought of having the performers seated in four corners of the stage, but later deemed the idea impractical. The Juilliard String Quartet played the premiere of Carter's *String Quartet no. 2* on March 25, 1960, in New York City.

In his own analysis of the work, Carter writes: "The form of the quartet helps to make elements of the four-way conversation clear. . . . The *Allegro fantastico* is led by the violin, whose whimsical, ornate part is imitated by the other three. . . . The same occurs in the *Presto scherzando*, led by the second violin, and the *Andante*, led expressively by the cello, which eventually draws the others into one of its characteristic accelerations." In between the

movements, the composer inserts cadenzas—one for the viola, one for the cello, and the last for the violin. Throughout the twenty-minute work, the second violin acts as a moderating influence, using its pizzicato and bowed notes to mark regular time.

If Haydn is regarded as the progenitor of the string quartet, Beethoven was the composer who brought the genre to its zenith. His sixteen quartets cover the period from the late 1790s to 1826, a year before his death, and are evenly spaced throughout his creative career. Beethoven's personal style emerges strongly in the set of three quartets he grouped under opus 59. They are known to posterity as the "Razumovsky" quartets, after the man who commissioned them—Count Andrey Kyrillovich Razumovsky (1752–1836), who was the Russian ambassador to the Hapsburg court in Vienna in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Particularly noteworthy is the exploitation of instrumental timbres. In the earlier quartets, the themes are generally played by the first violin while the other three instruments provide the accompaniment. In opus 59, no. 3, which is the ninth of his quartets, Beethoven opens with a slow introduction which leads into the *Allegro vivace*. The first and last movements of this work are happy outbursts of the composer's growing maturity and innovative skill. The second movement has been called a "lament," perhaps due to the theme—a soulful violin melody over a pizzicato from the cello. A traditional minuet provides the third movement, which leads to the energetic finale, a fully-developed fugue marked *Allegro molto*. This was the first time that Beethoven included such a lengthy fugue in a string quartet, and it constituted an act of courage on his part. Some of the fugues that he had written earlier had been compared unfairly with fugues of Bach, and were subjected to ridicule by critics, making Beethoven quite sensitive about the subject. The viola launches the driving fugal theme, which is then taken over by the second violin, followed by the cello and the first violin. Marked by dynamic energy and a triumphant conclusion, this movement acts as a kind of vindication for a composer who did not need to prove himself.

Program notes by Sorab Modi

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

National Gallery Chamber Players Piano Trio

Music by Dvořák, Ravel, and Schoenfield

February 24, 2008

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court



Celeste Headlee, *soprano*

Danielle DeSwert, *pianist*

Music by William Grant Still

Presented in honor of African American History Month

February 27, 2008

Wednesday, 12:10 pm

West Building Lecture Hall