



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

National Gallery of Art
2,731st Concert

Dan Zhu, violinist
Jie Chen, pianist

June 7, 2009
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Three Chinese Folk Songs

Pastoral (1953) by HanKun Sha

Rondo no. 1 (1937) by Sicong Ma

Berceuse (1935) by Sicong Ma

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Fantasia for Violin and Piano in C Major ("Sei mir gegrüsst!"),

D. 934 (op. posth. 159)

Andante moderato

Allegretto

Andantino

Tempo I; allegro vivace; allegretto; presto

INTERMISSION

Anton Webern (1883–1945)

Four Pieces for Violin and Piano, op. 7 (1910)

Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Sonata no. 2 in D Minor, op. 121 (1851)

Ziemlich langsam; Lebhaft

Sehr lebhaft

Leise, einfach

Bewegt

*This concert is made possible in part by a gift
from the Markow-Totevy Foundation.*

The Musicians

DAN ZHU

Described as “one of the emerging Chinese international artists today” (*Gramophone*), and “an artist of affecting humility and beautiful tone production” (*The Strad*), Dan Zhu has given concerts in Asia, Europe, and North America. As a soloist, he has appeared with The China Philharmonic Orchestra, the Lutoslawski Philharmonic, l’Orchestre National de Belgique, l’Orquestre de Cadaques, l’Orchestre National de France, and l’Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, playing under the direction of Maestros Matthias Bamert, Philippe Entremont, Christoph Eschenbach, Krzysztof Penderecki, and Jeffrey Tate. As a chamber musician, he has collaborated with Richard Goode, Nobuko Imai, Michel Lethiec, Dame Felicity Lott, Paul Meyer, Arto Noras, Bruno Pasquier, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, and Radovan Vlatkovic, and has performed at the Marlboro Festival, the Prades-Casals Festival, Festival Pontlevoy, Festival de Giverny, and the Spoleto Festival. In the 2009–2010 season, he will play recitals at the Kuhmo Festival in Finland and the Theatre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, among other orchestral and festival engagements.

Zhu has won awards at several international competitions, among them the China International Violin Competition, the Concours Musical International de Montreal, the Concours Reine Elisabeth in Brussels, the Sendai International Music Competition in Japan, and the Waldo Mayo Memorial Competition for Young Gifted Violinists, at which he took first prize.

Born in Beijing, Dan Zhu made his public debut at age nine, performing the Mendelssohn *Violin Concerto* with the China Youth Chamber Orchestra. At twelve he entered the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. Four years later he was awarded the Alexis Gregory Scholarship to study with Lucie Robert at The Mannes College of Music in New York. In 2003 he received the Premier Prix de Violon at The Fontainebleau American Conservatory. Zhu plays on a Carlo Antonio Testore violin of 1763, generously loaned by the Alexis Gregory Foundation.

JIE CHEN

Pianist Jie Chen is a winner of the Arthur Rubinstein Piano Master Competition in Israel, the Piano-E-International Competition in America, the Santander Paloma O'Shea International Competition in Spain, and the Van Cliburn International Competition in Fort Worth, Texas. Her performances have been broadcast on the German radio station MDR, Israel National Television, the Italian National Television Network RAIUNO, Minnesota Public Radio, American Public Radio's "Performance Today," and the National Television of Spain.

Since her debut at age sixteen with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Maestro Wolfgang Sawallisch, she has performed in Alice Tully Hall and Carnegie Hall in New York, the Herkulessaal in Munich, the Terrace Theater at the Kennedy Center, and many other leading music venues throughout the world. The *New York Times* wrote: "she has shown she is more than a virtuosic clone," and a critic at the Gilmore Rising Stars Series wrote: "Chen displayed almost frightening technical capabilities wedded to superior musicality." The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* proclaimed "A star is born!" A frequent soloist with major orchestras, she has collaborated with the Israel Symphony Orchestra, the Israel Philharmonic, the Minnesota Orchestra and Maestro Osmo Vanska, the New Jersey Symphony and Maestro Neemi Jarvi, the Orquesta Sinfonica de Madrid and Maestro Jesus Lopez-Cobos, the Sinfonia Varsovia of Poland, and the Vienna Chamber Orchestra. Chen has also just released a solo album on the NAXOS label featuring works by Chinese composers.

A Yamaha artist, Chen studied at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in China; the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where she was awarded the Fastorazzi Prize for "Best Pianist of the Year;" and the Mannes School of Music in New York.

Program Notes

Sha Han Kun's *Pastoral* uses a folk song from the eastern part of Inner Mongolia as its melody. The words are quintessentially pastoral: "In the blue sky there are clots of white cloud. Beneath the cloud are herds of white sheep. These herds look like little dots of white silver, spreading over the meadow. How lovely it is!" *Pastoral* reflects the unsung text in its use of an extraordinarily beautiful yet simple melody.

Born in 1912, Ma Sicong (Ma Sitzon) enjoyed a distinguished career as a composer and violinist. He began his instrumental study and pursued his interest in folk music when he was at a primary school in Guangzhou, China. In 1923 he went to France for the first time to study the violin, returning to China in 1929 after finishing his studies. As one of China's first violinists, he gave concerts in Guangzhou, Nanjing, Shanghai, and other cities. In 1930 he went to France for the second time to study composition.

Ma devoted his whole life to creating a new national identity for Chinese music. He pioneered the use of folk idioms, often adopting fragments or motifs from folk tunes, crafting them into his own musical writing. *Rondo no. 1* and *Berceuse* were written during his second trip to France. In *Rondo No. 1*, the composer incorporated a folk tune from the province of ShanXi (mid-west China), and in *Berceuse* he expressed his nostalgia for his homeland through the touching melodies.

Franz Schubert's *Fantasy in C Major for Violin and Piano*, composed in 1827 and premiered in 1828, the year of his death, stands apart from the rest of his late works. Written for the young virtuoso violinist, Joseph Slavik, it is a flashy tour-de-force in the style of Liszt and Paganini, filled with technical fireworks for both pianist and violinist. This is in stark contrast to the other works he wrote late in his life, such as the famous song cycle *Die Winterreise* and the two piano trios. Perhaps Schubert was trying to carry on the torch of the great Beethoven, in the year of his death, with a groundbreaking modern style. In any event, the *Fantasy* was too complex and unusual for the public.

unconventional sequence. The first section in C major acts as a sort of introduction, moving into a fast Hungarian-style dance in A minor, which acts as the second movement. Schubert borrowed from himself for the third movement, using his song *Sei mir gegrüsst* as the theme for which he wrote variations. In the last movement, Schubert brings back themes from earlier sections, culminating in a lively, almost symphonic *Presto*.

Anton Webern began to experiment with extreme concentration in all of the elements of his music with his *Four Pieces for Violin and Piano*, op. 7. They are unlike anything else that was written at the time, examples of which would include Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* (1913), Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911), and Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* (1910). The *Four Pieces* contain, respectively, nine, twenty-four, fourteen, and fifteen measures. They are arranged in somewhat of a slow-fast-slow-fast order, with the third being the very slowest, and the second having the fastest tempo. However, because of the very concentrated nature of the writing, one's perception of length is somewhat obscured.

It is not only in brevity that Webern creates this minimalist yet intense aesthetic. In fact, it is in the dynamic polarity, color, and gesture where it is most defined. In the first piece, the violin uses four different techniques, including sustained harmonics and pizzicato. The wild and rhapsodic second piece provides ample contrast to the third, in which *pianissimo* (pp) is the loudest marked dynamic. Where he calls for the softest dynamic, *pianississimo* (ppp), Webern adds "kaum hörbar," (scarcely audible). The fourth piece highlights opposites in high and low pitches, and in making one instrument primary and the other secondary alternately. When the pieces are played with exactitude and extreme attention to every detail, it is clear that Webern (even at such an early stage in his career) was a master of creating a fascinating sound-world with very few notes on the page.

Written on the heels of his first violin sonata (it is believed that Schumann was unhappy with his first, and began almost immediately to write the second), and composed in about a week in October 1851, the *Sonata no. 2 in D Minor for Violin and Piano* is generally considered the superior of the two. He spent much of that year concentrating on minor keys and works of

an introspective nature, including the *Piano Trio in G Minor* and the *Phantasiestücke*, opus 111. As is the case with most of Schumann's chamber works with piano, the violin sonatas are driven by the piano part.

The first movement of the second violin sonata is not unlike the opening of the composer's *Piano Trio in D Minor*, opus 63. Both works feature a stormy and vigorous *lento* introduction, based on the main theme. Once the sonata proper begins, the tempo quickens as the violin comes in with its statement of the theme. The second movement is essentially a *scherzo*, led by the piano in a pulsing duple meter. In the trio section, the violin takes its own path, introducing what will be thematic material in the third movement. In the slow movement (*Leise; einfach*) (quiet; simple) Schumann uses a cyclical technique, as he reintroduces the *scherzo* theme within the movement's variations. The brisk finale gives each instrument a chance to lead and a time to accompany, though neither gets an opportunity to rest amid all the activity. Schumann closes the last movement in a major tonality, finally lifting the mood of the otherwise dark work.

Program notes on "Three Chinese Folk Songs" by Dan Zhu

Other notes by Danielle DeSwert

Next week at the National Gallery of Art

National Gallery Piano Trio

with

Vilmos Szabadi, *violin*

Szilvia Kovacs, *viola*

Music by Dohnányi, Shostakovich, and Weiner

June 14, 2009

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

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.

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With apologies to her and to the audience for an error in the program, the National Gallery music department welcomes pianist Renana Gutman, who collaborates with Dan Zhu in tonight's recital. Praised by the New York Sun for playing "with great vigor and aplomb" and for the "true poetry in her phrasing," Gutman has performed across three continents as an orchestral soloist, recitalist, and collaborative pianist. A top prize winner at New York's International Keyboard Festival, the Los Angeles Liszt Competition, and Israel's Tel-Hai International Master Classes, she has performed with the Doctors Orchestral Society of New York, I Fiamminghi, the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, and the Mannes College Community Orchestra. Her recordings have been heard and seen on the BBC, National Public Radio, and Israel's "Voice of Music" radio and television network.

An ardent interpreter of Beethoven, Gutman was one of four young pianists selected by Leon Fleisher to participate in his most recent workshop on Beethoven piano sonatas hosted by Carnegie Hall, where she performed the "Hammerklavier" and "Appassionata" sonatas to critical acclaim.

This summer she will be in residence for the third time at the Marlboro Music Festival, where she previously collaborated with Richard Goode, Mitsuko Uchida, and members of the Guarneri and Mendelssohn string quartets. Much affiliated with vocalists, Gutman has performed with Lincoln Center soprano Susan Naruki and Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Tamara Mumford. Her readings of contemporary and twentieth-century composers such as Paul Ben-Haim, George Crumb, Nathan Currier, Charles Ives, György Kurtag, and Kaija Saariaho have been heard at the Yellow Barn Chamber Music Festival and New Music Mannes as well as the Walden Music School and several

universities in the United States. The recent debut in Cleveland of Terzetto, a piano trio she founded with violinist Diana Cohen and cellist Tanya Ell, was received with great enthusiasm.

A native of Israel, Gutman started playing the piano at age six. Soon recognized as a prodigy, she garnered multiple awards and honors, and received scholarships from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation and the Jewish Foundation for the Education of Women. She counts among her most influential teachers Natasha Tadson in Israel and Richard Goode at the Mannes College of Music in New York, where Gutman completed her bachelor and master of music degrees. Among the other prominent pianists with whom she has worked are Marcel Baudet, Victor Derevianko, Vladimir Feltsman, Martin Isepp, Pnina Salzman, and Andras Schiff.