

Upcoming Concerts at the National Gallery of Art

Marcus Thompson, violist
Judith Gordon, pianist

Music by J. S. Bach, Enescu, Lee, and Schumann

Presented in honor of African-American History Month

February 13, 2011
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.

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
www.nga.gov

COVER: Paul Cézanne, *Landscape near Paris*, c. 1876,
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Chester Dale Collection



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

National Gallery of Art
2,823rd Concert

Janice Martin, violin
Michael Ricchiuti, piano
John Wohlstetter, guest lecturer

February 9, 2011
Wednesday, 12:10 pm
West Building Lecture Hall

Admission free

Program

Music by George Gershwin (1898–1937)

Three Preludes

Allegro ben ritmato e deciso

Andante con moto e poco rubato

Allegro ben ritmato e deciso

“Someone to Watch Over Me”

“It Ain’t Necessarily So”

“Summertime”

An American in Paris

“Nice Work If You Can Get It”

“Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off”

Cadenza from *Concerto in F*

Commentary on and performance of *Rhapsody in Blue*

This concert is made possible by support from the Billy Rose Foundation.

The Musicians

JANICE MARTIN

Violinist, pianist, and soprano Janice Martin’s multiple talents have entertained and inspired audiences attuned to classical and popular music as well as jazz. A native of Racine, Wisconsin, Martin is a graduate of Indiana University and The Juilliard School of Music. Her numerous honors include a career award grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and top prizes at both the Washington International and the Young Artist International Competitions. In recognition of her musical achievements, the Stradivari Society made the 1708 Burstein/Bagshawe Stradivarius violin available for her personal use in concerts for five years.

Since her successful debut at Carnegie Hall, Martin has played with the Atlanta, Edmonton, Houston, Milwaukee, Portland, Seattle, and Victoria symphony orchestras; the European Union Chamber Orchestra and the New York Symphonic Ensemble; and has performed in some of the most celebrated concert halls in the world, including New York’s Avery Fisher Hall, Paris’ Bastille Opera House, Prague’s Rudolfinum, and Tokyo’s Suntory Hall.

A former member of the United States Army Band, Martin has collaborated with jazz artists Larry Willis and David Bixler and has had pieces composed for her by Charlie Barnett, Bixler, Bob Goldstone, Steven Stuckey, Brandon Terzic, and Uli Geissendoerfer. In 2009 she appeared on the NBC Series *America’s Got Talent* with her aerial violin performance—playing an electric violin while performing acrobatics on a silk trapeze—and her playing has been featured on television projects for the Discovery and History Channels as well as in the Miramax film *Paperclips*.

Today’s concert includes music from a show Martin created titled *Dear Mr. Gershwin*. It is one of a number of touring shows that include new ways of performing old standards, often exploring classical and non-classical genres together.

MICHAEL RICCHIUTI

An emerging artist with a refreshing contemporary approach to his playing and writing, keyboardist Michael Ricchiuti is grounded in the jazz piano tradition, drawing upon a wide variety of influences, including the music of Herbie Hancock, Keith Jarrett, and Stevie Wonder. Born in Brooklyn, Ricchiuti began taking piano lessons at age seven. As a young boy he studied classical music, but Billy Joel was his musical hero. In his late teens he enrolled at Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he studied with Jeff Covell, Herb Pomeroy, and Ray Santisi, among others. In 1991 Ricchiuti returned to New York City to embark on his career, while continuing to study with Fred Hersch and Kenny Werner.

Ricchiuti has toured Europe and the United States as organist with the legendary funk saxophonist Maceo Parker and played in the house band for the “I Love NY” benefit concert held at the Beacon Theater in New York City for victims of the World Trade Center tragedy. He has also worked with Chris Botti, Michael Brecker, Peabo Bryson, Gloria Estefan, Bill Evans, David Foster, Steve Gadd, Omar Hakim, James Ingram, Will Lee, and John Patitucci. Most recently Ricchiuti has been on a world tour with GRAMMY award-winning singer Patti Austin as her keyboardist and musical director, promoting her latest recording, *Avant Gershwin*. Other recent performances include appearances on NBC’s *The Today Show* and CBS’s *The Early Show* as a member of Sting’s orchestra, and concerts to celebrate Quincy Jones’ seventy-fifth birthday. Ricchiuti’s recording credits include *When I’m With You* with Chuck Loeb, *A New Kind of Blue* featuring Randy Brecker, and tracks with Spyro Gyra, Bob James, and Eric Marienthal. Ricchiuti performs with his own band and has produced a solo CD, *The Way I See It*.

JOHN WOHLSTETTER

Author, commentator, and patron of the arts John Wohlstetter has been fascinated by the music of George Gershwin since he was a young piano student. He has made a special study of the *Rhapsody in Blue*, uncovering details about the background of the work that have not heretofore been published. A member of the board of directors of the National Symphony Orchestra and Washington Bach Consort and a trustee of the Billy Rose Foundation, the Hudson Institute, and the National Foundation for Facial Reconstruction, Wohlstetter is a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute, author of *The Long War Ahead and the Short War Upon Us*, and founder of the issues blog “Letter from the Capitol.”

Program Notes

Chester Dale (1883–1962) was an astute businessman who made his fortune on Wall Street in the bond market. He thrived on forging deals and translated much of this energy and talent into his art collecting, a passion that was encouraged by his wife, Maud, who was the daughter of an artist. Dale acquired a magnificent collection of French and American paintings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which he bequeathed in 1962 to the National Gallery of Art. *From Impressionism to Modernism: The Chester Dale Collection* remains on view through January 2, 2012.

The Dales were active New York socialites who attended and sometimes hosted the most fashionable parties held on the Upper West Side. One of the few musicians who also frequented those gatherings was George Gershwin, who by 1925 had achieved sufficient fame and wealth just from the publication and frequent performance of his *Rhapsody in Blue* to afford a townhouse in the same neighborhood and the social life that went with it. Gershwin and Dale were acquaintances, and it was Gershwin's encounter with the art in Dale's apartment at the Park Lane Hotel that inspired him to collect art himself and develop his skills as a painter. An incident from one of their meetings is recorded in notes that Dale left behind, which were edited and reproduced in an autobiography by John Walker, who was the director of the National Gallery of Art when it received the Dale bequest:

I bumped into George somewhere I can't remember now. He said, "Oh, Chester, I understand you got a lot of swell pictures. I'd like to see them." I said, "It's OK with me, George, come over any time it's convenient for you..." So George, and I think his brother and somebody else, I don't remember, came in for cocktails. Just where we were in the morning room there happened to be a Cézanne right near the door called *Estaque*... George said, "My God, that's a wonderful picture!" I said, "What the hell do you know about pictures?" "Well," he said, "It's a Cézanne, isn't it?" I said, "Sure, it's a Cézanne... Are you interested in art outside of your great art?" He said, "Yes, Chester, I'm crazy about pictures..." And he proceeded to tell me some things about Cézanne that even I didn't know.

I said, "Now look, George, if you feel that way, why don't you go to the piano and play me a Cézanne?" So he went to the piano... I haven't got any more idea than the man in the moon what he played, but emotionally, there was Cézanne to the both of us. (John Walker, *Self-portrait with Donors: Confessions of an Art Collector*, 1974, Boston, Little, Brown & Co.)

As a songwriter, George Gershwin worked in a medium that did not encourage innovation, but he found a distinctive personal style and created songs that remained popular even as fashions changed. From his exposure to jazz musicians and his own work as a jazz pianist, he developed an affinity for eight-bar phrases and an aggressive, swinging beat, with accents occurring on weak and strong beats alike. His personal touches included more frequent modulations than were normally heard in improvised jazz, occasional extreme modulations to distantly related keys, and chromatic melodies. Some of the music in this program was already written when Gershwin became acquainted with Chester Dale. "Someone to Watch Over Me" may well have been among the songs Gershwin played at the parties both men attended in the late 1920s.

*Program notes by Stephen Ackert, head of the music department,
National Gallery of Art*