

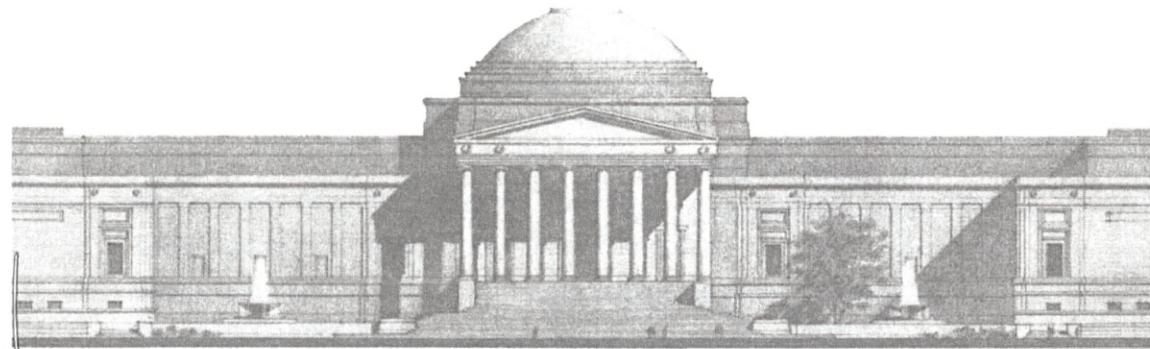
The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

For the convenience of concertgoers, the Garden Café remains open for light refreshments until 6:00 pm on Sundays.

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

www.nga.gov



The Seventieth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin

Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,879th Concert

Cyrus Forough, violinist
Stephen Ackert, pianist

March 18, 2012
Sunday, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano, op. 30, no. 1 (1801–1802)

Allegro

Adagio molto espressivo

Allegretto con variazioni

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Ciaccona from Partita no. 2 for Solo Violin, BWV 1004 (1717–1723)

INTERMISSION

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Sonata in D Major, op. 1, no. 13 (c. 1750)

Affettuoso

Allegro

Larghetto

Allegro

Ernest Bloch (1880–1959)

“Nigun” (Improvisation) from *Three Pictures of Hasidic Life* (1934)

Manuel de Falla (1876–1946)

Danza española no. 1 from *La Vida breve* (1904–1905)

Transcribed for violin and piano by Fritz Kreisler

The Musicians

CYRUS FOROUGH

A former pupil of Arthur Grumiaux, David Oistrakh, and Josef Gingold, violinist Cyrus Forough is a laureate of the Tchaikovsky International Competition, first-prize winner of the Milwaukee Symphony Violin Competition, and with his wife, pianist Carolyn McCracken, winner of the United States Information Agency’s National Violin and Piano Duo Competition. He also holds the World Academy of Arts, Literature, and Media Award in recognition of his contributions to classical music and education. Forough’s recital and orchestra appearances throughout eastern and western Europe, Russia, and the Middle East have been praised by audiences and critics alike: “Warsaw’s audience especially loved violinist Cyrus Forough. His instrumental ability and beautiful cantilenas won enthusiastic and prolonged applause” (*Warsaw News*); “Deep interpretive insight and technical mastery” (*Pravda*); “A deeply poetic vision of mystic quality... he gives the music his essence and then the miracle happens” (*La Libre Belgique*). He has performed with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, the Belgian National Radio Orchestra, the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, and the National Gallery of Art Orchestra. His live and recorded performances have been broadcast on radio and television on four continents.

Formerly a professor of violin at Roosevelt University’s College of Performing Arts, Forough is currently professor of violin at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh and artist-in-residence at the Music Institute of Chicago. Much in demand as a teacher, his students include prizewinners in many national and international competitions, as well as members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, the New World Symphony Orchestra, and the symphony orchestras of Calgary, Houston, and Milwaukee. Forough serves on the faculties of a number of summer academies, including the Académie Internationale de Musique de Montpellier in France, the Beverly Hills International Chamber Music Festival in California, and the Bowdoin International Music Festival in Maine.

STEPHEN ACKERT

Now in his eighth year as head of the music department at the National Gallery of Art, Stephen Ackert studied the organ at Oberlin College; Northwestern University; the Hochschule für Music in Frankfurt am Main, Germany; and the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where he completed his doctoral studies in organ in 1974. A resident of the Washington area since 1979, he has performed at many of its premier venues, including the Kennedy Center, the National Cathedral, and the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. In 2008 he undertook his ninth recital tour of historic concert halls and churches in Germany, and in 2010 he played for the national convention of the American Liszt Society.

In addition to his administrative duties at the Gallery, Ackert presents lectures and preconcert talks on the interrelationships between music and art. His lectures and recitals on organ, piano, and harpsichord have also been heard at the Amalfi Coast Music and Art Festival in Italy; the Austrian, German, and Italian embassies in Washington; the Kennedy Center; and the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore.

Program Notes

Ludwig van Beethoven composed most of his opus 30 violin sonatas between March and May of 1802, after having relocated from Bonn to Heiligenstadt in hopes of improving his hearing. During this desperate period, as the composer struggled with and finally began to accept his impending deafness, the sonatas came to life, along with the opus 31 piano sonatas and the *Second Symphony*. Dedicated to Tsar Alexander I of Russia, the *Sonata in A Major* opens with a movement in standard sonata form but with two eccentricities—Beethoven extends and varies the main theme as he repeats it, and modulates to the dominant key after only sixteen measures. The second movement is a haunting, expressive episode in rondo form. Choosing to write a theme and six variations for the final movement, Beethoven provides an opening theme with strong ties to the primary themes of the first two movements, and the variations allow for a versatile and virtuosic conclusion to the sonata. Still unusual for Beethoven in 1802, the practice of composing a final movement in variation form became a common device in many of his later compositions.

Johann Sebastian Bach's partitas for solo violin represent the apex of polyphonic writing for non-keyboard instruments, and they played an important role in advancing violin technique. The final movement of *Partita no. 2 in D Minor*—"Ciaccona" (sometimes identified by its French title, "Chaconne")—is a series of variations based on a repeated harmonic pattern that stands alone as the most intellectually powerful and musically complex work ever written for an unaccompanied string instrument. The "Ciaccona" consists of sixty-four variations across three sections (first D minor, then D major, and again D minor) and lasts roughly fifteen minutes, longer than the partita's first four movements combined. Johannes Brahms wrote of the movement, "If I... could have created, even conceived the piece, I am quite certain that the excess of excitement and earth-shattering experience would have driven me out of my mind." Even today it is considered one of the most technically demanding pieces in the violin repertoire.

In 1724 George Frideric Handel's publisher, John Walsh (c. 1666–1736) released a collection of fifteen sonatas composed for undetermined solo

instruments and basso continuo accompaniment. Although it is traditional to play these sonatas on flute, oboe, or violin, six of the fifteen are generally treated as violin sonatas. When Walsh's successor reissued the set in 1750, he inserted two new sonatas, including the *Sonata in D Major*, no. 13. The form follows that of a standard baroque church sonata, alternating slow and fast movements. The first movement resembles Handel's lyrical operatic arias. The second is brilliant and virtuosic, imitating the agile singing style of his more energetic arias. The third movement mirrors the first in expressive power but adds a sense of tragedy previously unrealized, and the fourth concludes the piece in a lively, dancelike finale in triple meter.

Swiss composer Ernest Bloch completed his studies in Brussels and Frankfurt-am-Main and subsequently immigrated to the United States in 1916. Bloch's early works exhibit the influence of the titanic turn-of-the-twentieth-century composers Claude Debussy and Richard Strauss. By 1934, when Bloch transcribed *Three Pictures of Hasidic Life* for violin from the original cello and piano version, he was turning increasingly to his Jewish heritage for inspiration. The middle movement, "Nigun," is an extroverted piece evoking the deep religious feelings associated with the atonement for sin. This movement is often performed separately from the suite's melancholy outer movements, as in tonight's program.

In Manuel de Falla's opera, *La Vida breve*, a young man named Paco, makes plans to marry the wealthy Carmela, having promised his love to a gypsy girl, Salud, only the day before. Salud confronts Paco before his wedding guests, and when he refuses to acknowledge their love, she collapses in death. Amid the tempestuous events of the second act, a Spanish dance emerges, featuring the stomping, clapping, and bustling activity of an extravagant wedding reception. The energetic and catchy dance melody alternates in major and minor modes, thus juxtaposing the joyful chaos of a wedding celebration with the melancholy of the impending tragedy. The orchestral music that accompanies the dance in the opera was transcribed for solo violin and piano by Fritz Kreisler.

Program notes by Michael Jacko, concert aide, National Gallery of Art

Upcoming concerts at the National Gallery of Art

Jessica Jones, soprano

Danielle Hahn, pianist

Music by Nadia and Lili Boulanger,
Copland, and Robert and Clara Schumann

March 25, 2012

Sunday, 6:30 pm

East Building Auditorium



Taikoza

Japanese traditional music
for drums and flute

First concert in the
National Gallery of Art
Cherry Blossom Music Festival

March 31, 2012

Saturday, 4:00 pm

West Building, Mall Entrance
(Outdoor performance, weather permitting)