

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.

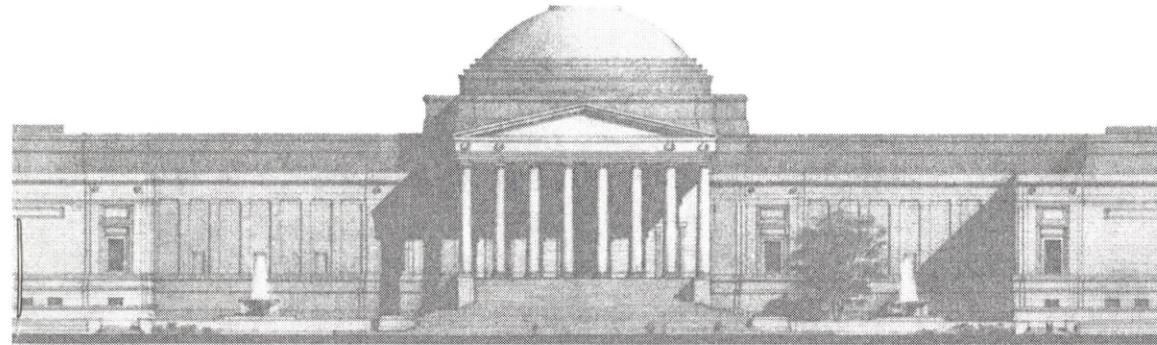
For the convenience of concertgoers, the Garden Café remains open for light refreshments until 6:00 pm on Sundays.

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

www.nga.gov

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The Seventy-first Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,957th Concert

Mendelssohn Piano Trio

Peter Sirotin, *violin*
Fiona Thompson, *cello*
Ya-Ting Chang, *piano*

June 30, 2013
Sunday, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809–1847)

Piano Trio in C Minor, op. 66, no. 2 (1845)

Allegro energico e con fuoco

Andante espressivo

Scherzo: Molto allegro; quasi presto

Finale: Allegro appassionato

INTERMISSION

Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Trio for Piano, Violin, and Cello in A Minor, op. 50 (1881–1882)

Pezzo elegiaco: Moderato assai; allegro giusto

Theme and Variations

Theme: Andante con moto

Variation I

Variation II: Più mosso

Variation III: Allegro moderato

Variation IV: L'istesso tempo

Variation V: L'istesso tempo

Variation VI: Tempo di valse

Variation VII: Allegro moderato

Variation VIII: Fugue: Allegro moderato

Variation IX: Andante flebile, ma non tanto

Variation X: Tempo di Mazurka

Variation XI: Moderato

Finale and Coda: Allegro risoluto e con fuoco

The Musicians

MENDELSSOHN PIANO TRIO

Now celebrating its fifteenth year, the Mendelssohn Piano Trio has made its mark as an exceptional chamber music ensemble, thanks to its combination of powerful individual talents and tight-knit collaboration. The Trio's extensive repertoire embraces works from all periods of the genre's history, which dates back to the mid-eighteenth century. Currently an ensemble-in-residence for Washington's Embassy Series and Messiah College as well as Pennsylvania's "Chamber Music in Grantham" summer festival, the Trio has earned such accolades as "unfathomably beautiful," "transcendent," and "electrifying" (*Washington Post*). The group has presented the complete Beethoven piano trios in Portugal and Washington, DC, and is currently recording the complete Haydn piano trios for Centaur Records. Its performance at the National Concert Hall in Taipei, Taiwan, was recorded for the Taiwanese classical music TV channel, and its 2005 concert at the National Gallery of Art was broadcast on American Public Media's *Performance Today*. An international ensemble, the Mendelssohn Piano Trio consists of violinist Peter Sirotin from Ukraine, cellist Fiona Thompson from England, and pianist Ya-Ting Chang from Taiwan.

PETER SIROTIN

Since his concert debut at age fourteen, performing Paganini's *Concerto no. 1* with the Kharkiv Philharmonic Orchestra in his native Ukraine, violinist Peter Sirotin has performed hundreds of concerts as a chamber musician, soloist, and concertmaster in Asia, Europe, and North America. After graduating with honors from Moscow's Central Music School, he became the youngest member of the Moscow Soloists chamber ensemble, with which he toured extensively, performing in the major European music centers. Sirotin continued his studies at the Peabody Institute at

Johns Hopkins University, where he received the first graduate performance diploma in chamber music awarded in the history of that school. Currently an acting concertmaster of the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra, he is an artist-in-residence at Messiah College, where he cofounded a summer chamber music and composition program for young musicians, and an artistic director of the Harrisburg's Market Square Concerts. Together with his wife, pianist Ya-Ting Chang, he founded the Mendelssohn Piano Trio in 1997.

FIONA THOMPSON

Cellist Fiona Thompson has performed throughout Asia, Europe, and the United States, drawing praise for her “eloquent,” “radiant,” and “unfailingly handsome” sound (*Washington Post*). In addition to her work with the Mendelssohn Piano Trio, Thompson has performed with the Melos Ensemble, the Cygnus Chamber Ensemble, and the Rasumovsky Quartet. A 1994 graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England, she was subsequently accepted by the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music on a full scholarship. Currently a teacher and artist-in-residence at Messiah College in Pennsylvania, she plays a cello made by Paolo Testore circa 1750.

YA-TING CHANG

A member of the piano faculty at Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania, Ya-Ting Chang won first prize in the 1987 Taiwan National Piano Competition. Upon coming to the United States in 1988 as part of the Taiwanese government's Gifted Children Program, she studied piano with Enrique Graf and later entered the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University as a scholarship student of Ann Schein. Together with her husband, Peter Sirotin, she has appeared as a soloist in the world premiere of Ching-Ju Shih's *Double Concerto for Violin, Piano, and Orchestra* at the National Concert Hall in Taipei, Taiwan. She is the executive director of Market Square Concerts.

Program Notes

Composed in 1845, Mendelssohn's *Piano Trio in C Minor* was the last of his chamber works published during his lifetime. In the middle of the 1844–1845 concert season, he was granted a brief sabbatical from his duties as music director, administrator, and conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus, giving him an opportunity to concentrate on his writing. In addition to some substantial work on his oratorio *Elijah*, he completed the *String Quintet in B-flat Major* and the *C Minor Piano Trio*. Responding to urgent pleas from the management of the Gewandhaus, he returned to his demanding position the following fall. The resumption of a frantic pace of life was deemed to be a factor in his untimely death in 1847.

One of Mendelssohn's strongest sonata movements, the opening movement of the *C Minor Trio* features a first theme with dramatic rising and falling figures, followed by a sweeping second theme. The second movement, marked *Andante*, is an extended three-part song without words—one of Mendelssohn's favorite genres. The swift, light, and nimble third movement is a prime example of his characteristic scherzo writing, as the elfin perpetual motion evokes visions of woodland creatures. The impassioned *Finale* presents a principal subject with a great leap in the cello, balanced by a second theme based on a chorale that has been traced to the *Genevan Psalter* of 1551.

In October 1880, Tchaikovsky's patroness, Nadezhda von Meck (1831–1894), asked him to compose a piano trio for the household trio that regularly gave concerts in her home. Not having written much chamber music, the composer demurred, insisting that he did not find the piano to be compatible in tone with string instruments, and that he generally favored orchestral writing. When Nikolai Rubinstein, one of Russia's most prominent pianists died the following spring, Tchaikovsky composed the piano trio in memory of his dear friend and mentor. The work was completed in February 1882, and three colleagues from the Moscow Conservatory gave a private performance of it on the first anniversary of Rubinstein's

death, March 23, 1882. After a number of revisions and adjustments, the trio received its first public performance in October of that year, and subsequently became very popular during Tchaikovsky's lifetime, receiving numerous performances throughout Europe and the United States.

A large-scale work set in two sections, the trio is marked by a tragic tone. The mournful first movement (Pezzo elegiaco) is an elegy to Rubenstein and a moving testimony to the loss Tchaikovsky felt. In expanded sonata-allegro form, it is warm and passionate, presenting a number of lyrical melodies. The second movement is a theme and set of variations followed by a finale and coda. The simple folk-like theme and the eleven variations are said to have been inspired by a day Tchaikovsky and Rubenstein spent picnicking in the country, when a group of peasants appeared and provided music for the afternoon in exchange for food and wine. The grand finale begins as if it were a twelfth variation, but the mood abruptly changes as the opening theme from the first movement returns. Of greater length and difficulty than most piano trios, this work stands out in the chamber music repertoire as a touchstone of grandeur and brilliance.

*Program notes by Danielle DeSwert Hahn, music program specialist,
National Gallery of Art*

Concerts at the National Gallery of Art resume in September 2013

Forough-Kim-Janpoladyan Trio

Music by Schubert and Vali

September 22, 2013

Sunday, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court



National Gallery of Art New Music Ensemble

Music by Antosca, Cage, and other composers

In honor of *Yes, No, Maybe: Artists Working at Crown Point Press*

September 29, 2013

Sunday, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court