

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.

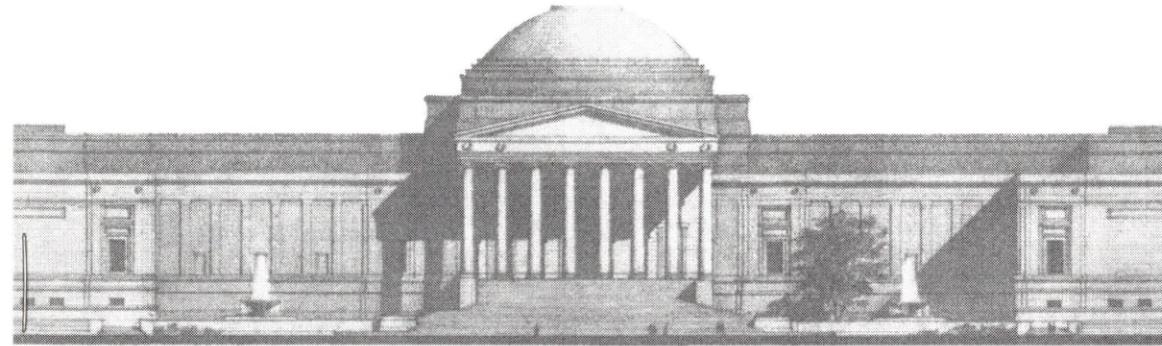
Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

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

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

National Gallery of Art
2,976th Concert

David Geringas, cellist

January 19, 2014
Sunday, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

John Corigliano (b. 1938)
Fancy on a Bach Air (1996)

J. S. Bach (1685–1750)
Suite no. 1 in G Major

Praeludium

Allemande

Courante

Sarabande

Menuets I and II

Gigue

Anatolijus Šenderovas (b. 1945)
Interludium

J. S. Bach
Suite no. 5 in C Minor

Prelude

Allemande

Courante

Sarabande

Gavottes I and II

Gigue

INTERMISSION

Pēteris Vasks (b. 1946)
Gramata cellam (1978)

David Geringas (b. 1946)
Gloria

J. S. Bach
Suite no. 3 in C Major
Prelude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Bourrée
Gigue

The Musician

In full command of an unusually broad repertoire from the early baroque to the contemporary, cellist and conductor David Geringas is known for his flexibility and innovative approach to music as well as his mastery of the cello. A former Rostropovich pupil and gold-medal winner of the 1970 Tchaikovsky Competition, Geringas continues with gusto a career that is now in its fourth decade. He has performed world-wide with many of the leading orchestras and important conductors of our time, and his discography includes recordings that have been honored with important prizes, including the Diapason d'Or, Grand Prix du Disque, and the 2011 Deutscher Schallplattenkritik Preis for his recording of the cello concertos of Hans Pfitzner (1869–1949).

A champion of new music, Geringas has played the Western European premieres of many works of the Russian and Lithuanian avant-garde. Among the well-known contemporary composers who have written cello concertos for him are Sofia Gubaidulina, Ned Rorem, Erkki-Sven Tüür, and Pēteris Vasks. As conductor, Geringas appears regularly in Germany and abroad, frequently in a dual role as cellist and conductor. From 2005 to 2008, he was chief guest conductor for the Tokyo Philharmonic and China Philharmonic orchestras. In 2009 he conducted the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, and the following year he made his debut as an opera conductor in Klaipeda, Lithuania, with Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*.

A recipient of Germany's Verdienstkreuz erste Klasse for his achievements as musician and cultural ambassador, David Geringas is an honorary professor at the Moscow Conservatory and the Central Conservatory in Beijing. He appears at the National Gallery of Art by arrangement with Shupp Artists Management, www.shuppartists.com.

Program Notes

Of his *Fancy on a Bach Air*, John Corigliano says: “This piece began in celebration and ended in memoriam. My cousin introduced me to his colleague Robert Goldberg and his wife Judy, avid music lovers both. We became fast friends. When, later, they asked me to compose a piece for their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, I suggested that instead of a single writer they ask a group of composers to write variations. And what better theme to choose than the venerable melody of the variations that bore their name? Bach would surely approve.

“Their close friends Yo-Yo Ma and Emanuel Ax agreed to play the variations. Then tragedy struck. Robert succumbed to a virulent cancer and died all too soon. Judy’s spirit and love led her to transform what might have been a requiem into a celebration of her husband’s life, and Ma and Ax performed the set of variations preceded by the Bach theme in Boston where the Goldbergs live. My ‘Goldberg Variation,’ *Fancy on a Bach Air*, is for unaccompanied cello. It transforms the gentle arches of Bach’s theme into slowly soaring arpeggios of almost unending phrase-lengths. Its dual inspiration was the love of two extraordinary people and the solo cello suites of a great composer—both of them strong, long-lined, passionate, eternal, and for me, definitive of all that is beautiful in life.”

Bach’s six suites for unaccompanied cello date from about 1720, when the composer was serving as *Kapellmeister* at the court of Anhalt-Cöthen. Bach did not play the cello, and it may well be that he wrote these suites for one of the cellists in the small professional orchestra that Prince Leopold maintained at court. For a non-cellist, Bach displayed profound knowledge of the instrument—the writing in these suites is idiomatic and assured, and makes full use of the instrument’s lower register. Like the sonatas and partitas for solo violin, the cello suites represent the summit of the music written for unaccompanied string instruments.

Bach’s suites for solo cello remained for years the property of a handful of connoisseurs—they were not published until 1828, more than a century after they were written. In addition to the standard dance movements included

in a suite—allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue—Bach added an introductory prelude to all six suites and interpolated one extra dance movement just before each final gigue to make a total of six movements.

The noble Prelude of the *Suite no. 1 in G Major* rides along a steady pulse of sixteenth-notes, and it is the responsibility of the performer to breathe musical life into these sequences. Bach makes full use of the resonant sound of the cello’s open G string that underlies so much of this movement, and indulges in a favorite pastime—inverted counterpoint—by concluding the movement with a series of notes that is an inversion of the opening series. The Allemande moves along in a similar sequence of steady sixteenths, although here the tempo feels slower and more dignified. In this and the other binary movements, the performer has the option of playing or ignoring the repeat of the second section. The Courante (French for “running”) sails along with somewhat harder-edged rhythms, while the Sarabande dances with grave dignity; Bach makes effective contrast here between the resonance of great chords and the steady flow of the melodic line. The interpolated movement in the *First Suite* is a pair of minuets. Their sprightly rhythms come from the origins of the minuet as a quick dance rather than the stately tempo at which it was danced in eighteenth-century courts. The concluding Gigue is a smoothly flowing brief dance in 6/8 time.

Anatolijus Šenderovas (b. 1945) studied composition with Eduardas Balsys (1919–1984), a leading Lithuanian composer of the post-World War II period, at the Lithuanian Academy of Music. Upon graduating from the academy in 1967, Šenderovas went on to study under Orest Evlakhov at the Saint Petersburg Nikolai Rimski-Korsakov State Conservatory. In 1990, he was a scholarship student at Tel Aviv’s Samuel Rubin Israel Academy of Music. Other awards he has garnered in the course of his career are the Order of the Grand Duke of Lithuania Gediminas (Knightly Cross), the Order of Merit to Lithuania (Officer’s Cross), second prize at the International Composition Competition in Prague (1993), a diploma at the International Witold Lutoslawski Composition Competition (1994), the Lithuanian National Prize (1997), the European Composers’ Prize (2002), and the Prize of the World Intellectual Property Organization (2008).

Bach's *Suite no. 5 in C Minor* is often regarded as one of the finest of the six that he wrote for solo cello. In minor key, it is expressive and somber. It was evidently a favorite of the composer, who arranged it for solo lute several years after writing it. An unusual feature of the cello version is that Bach asks the cellist to retune his instrument, tuning the A-string (the top string) down one full step to G; this makes possible certain chord combinations that would otherwise be impossible with normal tuning.

The Prelude opens with the dotted figures characteristic of the French overture and proceeds to fugal material, but the opening section does not return, as it does in the classic French overture. The slow Allemande (that title originally meant "German dance") retains the dotted rhythms of the opening movement, while the Courante is in a quick 3/2 meter, full of multiple stopping. This technique—playing two or three notes at once—presents special challenges to the cellist. The linear Sarabande, which unfolds with grave dignity, is followed by two Gavottes, one graceful and full of double-stopping, the other quick and built on flowing triplets. After a repeat of the first Gavotte, the suite ends with a Gigue that is quite serious, unlike the merry Irish ancestor of that dance, the jig. Long-breathed legato phrases maintain the somber gravity that has marked the entire suite.

Pēteris Vasks was born in Aizpute, Latvia, where his father was a Baptist pastor. Having received his early musical education at the local music school, he subsequently attended the Emils Darzins Music School in Riga (1959–1964), where he produced his first compositions and studied the double bass. His career as an orchestral player began in 1961, while he was still a student. Due to his religious beliefs and artistic convictions, Vasks suffered under the cultural repression of the Soviet period in Latvia, but the fall of the Iron Curtain brought swift and widespread recognition of his works. Much of his music is characterized by the juxtaposition of extremes—violent and ethereal, impetuous and reserved, strictly metered and largely improvisatory. *Gramata cellam* (Book for Solo Cello) tests every aspect of the performer's technical and musical abilities.

Known among the Bach cello suites for its heroic character, the *Suite no. 3* shows Bach's affinity for the cello in his choice of C major as its key. This enables him to make ample use of the cello's C string, and the resonance of this lowest string echoes throughout the suite. Even though every note is written out for the player, the prelude has an improvisatory quality—creating the effect, no doubt intended by the composer, that the performer is creating the music on the spot. In the Allemande, Bach enlivens the basic pulse with turns, double-stops, and thirty-second notes. The Courante races past, while the Sarabande is dignified and extremely slow. Many listeners will discover that they already know the first Bourrée, as this graceful dance has been arranged for many other instruments; Bach presents an extended variation of it in the second Bourrée. The concluding Gigue dances quickly in its 3/8 meter; Bach offers the cellist some brisk passagework as well as extended double-stopping in this high-spirited dance.

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

Upcoming Concerts at the National Gallery of Art

Dalí String Quartet

Music by Efrain Amaya
and other composers

January 26, 2014
Sunday, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court



Wolfgang Holzmaier, baritone
Russell Ryan, pianist

Schubert: *Schwanengesang*

February 2, 2014
Sunday, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Building Court



Fine Arts Quartet

Music by Kreisler and Zimbalist

February 9, 2014
Sunday, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Building Court

Upcoming Concerts at the National Gallery of Art

Aron Zelkowitz

Music by Barber, Chopin,
and other composers

February 16, 2014
Sunday, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court



Louise Toppin, soprano
Leon Bates, pianist

Spirituals and other music
by African American composers

February 23, 2014
Sunday, 6:30 pm
East Building Auditorium