

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.

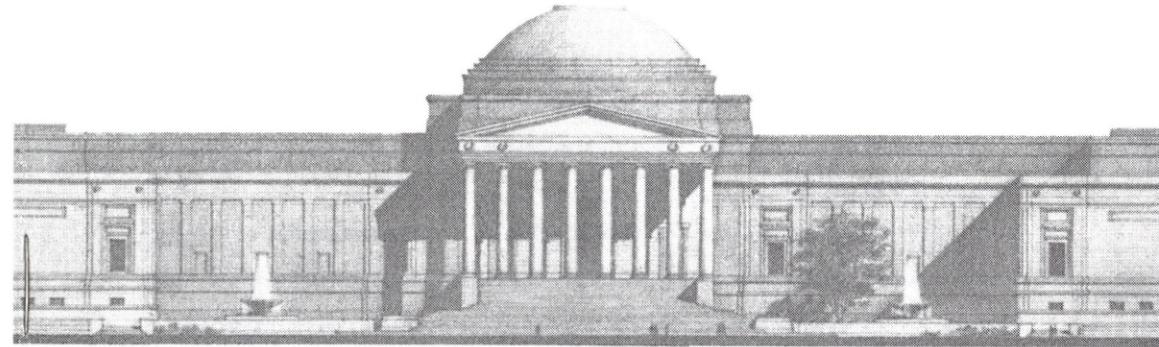
Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

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. Lamot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,979th Concert

Fine Arts Quartet
Ralph Evans and Efim Boico, violins
Juan-Miguel Hernandez, viola
Robert Cohen, cello

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

Admission free

Program

Fritz Kreisler (1875–1962)

String Quartet in A Minor (1919)

Fantasia: Moderato; allegro moderato

Scherzo: Allegro vivo con spirito

Einleitung und Romanze: Allegretto; andante con moto

Finale: Allegro molto moderato

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943)

String Quartet no.1 in G Minor (1889)

Romance: Andante espressivo

Scherzo: Allegro

INTERMISSION

Efrem Zimbalist Sr. (1889–1985)

String Quartet in E Minor (1932, rev. 1959)

Fantasia: Moderato francamente

Scherzo: Con brio

Romanza: Andante con moto

Finale: Moto perpetuo (Allegro di molto)

The Musicians

Ranked among the most distinguished and authoritative ensembles of our time, the Fine Arts Quartet was founded in Chicago in 1946, and has been based at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee since 1963. With nearly seven decades of concert tours, the quartet performs worldwide in Beijing, Berlin, Istanbul, Jerusalem, London, Madrid, Mexico City, Moscow, New York, Paris, Rome, Tokyo, and many other musical centers.

Among the most recent of the more than two hundred works the ensemble has recorded are Robert Schumann's *Piano Quintet*, *Piano Quartet*, and *Märchen-erzählungen* (Fairy Tales); the world-premiere recording of Efrem Zimbalist's *String Quartet in E Minor* in its 1959 revised edition; Eugène Ysaÿe's long-lost masterpiece for quartet and string orchestra, *Harmonies du soir*; and Fritz Kreisler's *String Quartet*. In 2013 Naxos released the Fine Arts' recording of Saint-Saëns' *Piano Quintet* and piano quartets to unanimous praise.

In 2012 the quartet earned special recognition from *Gramophone Classical Music Guide*, citing its recording of Fauré quintets with pianist Cristina Ortiz as a "Gramophone Award-winner and recording of legendary status." In 2010 its CD of quartets by César Franck was named "Editor's Choice" by *Gramophone* magazine, and in 2008 its album *Four American Quartets* was designated a "BBC Music Magazine Choice." Nearly all of the quartet's Naxos CDs have been Grammy® Awards nominees.

The subject of documentaries on French and American public television, the group has taught at the national music conservatories of Paris and Lyon as well as the summer music schools of Yale and Indiana universities. Its members are often found on the juries of the Bordeaux, Evian, and Shostakovich international competitions. More information about the Fine Arts Quartet is available at www.fineartsquartet.org. The quartet appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Melvin Kaplan, Inc., www.melkap.com.

Program Notes

One of the most famous violin masters of his day, Austrian-born violinist and composer Friedrich “Fritz” Kreisler was known for his sweet tone and infallible sense of rhythm and rubato. Although indebted to the Franco-Belgian school of violin playing, his style reflects the *gemütlich* (cozy) approach of pre-World War I Viennese musicians. His compositions are considered by most critics to be elevated salon music, yet they have survived the test of time and reflect his compassionate and congenial nature.

One of Kreisler’s rarely played masterpieces is his *String Quartet in A Minor*. Composers such as Kreisler, who rejected the idea of atonalism and the style of the Second Viennese School, nevertheless sought to find new and innovative ways to communicate their ideas. In his string quartet, Kreisler presents extremes of drama, energy, and languidity, all the while quoting traditional Austrian dance and folk tunes and genres. In her biography *Fritz Kreisler, Love’s Sorrow, Love’s Joy*, Amy Biancolli quotes him as identifying this work as his “tribute to Vienna.”

The first movement, Fantasia, strikes a note of tragic drama with the opening cello solo. This recitative is followed by a delicate waltz and an intensely anxious episode, after which the first section returns. The Scherzo dances along, bursting with energy, but the tonality of this movement has a wayward quality, and the languid trio section provides a striking contrast. In the third movement, Introduction and Romance, Kreisler introduces Viennese tunes and idioms from the days of his childhood. The Finale is a permutation of a polka, with reminders of the recitative and waltz that opened the work.

Sergei Rachmaninoff was the last of the Russian romantic composers in an extraordinary tradition that largely ended with the revolution of 1917. His musical life comprised three simultaneous and eminently successful careers—concert pianist, conductor, and composer. Best known for his second and third piano concertos, his second symphony, and the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, his legacy includes themes that have found their way into popular music and remain familiar to many music lovers, even though they may not know their origin. Two smaller works have enjoyed the same widespread recognition: the *Prelude in C-sharp Minor* for piano and the exquisite *Vocalise* that has been transcribed for nearly every imaginable ensemble.

Rachmaninoff twice attempted to write a string quartet, both times leaving the works unfinished with only two movements apiece. His first quartet, played on tonight’s program, was written when he was a precocious seventeen-year-old student at the Moscow Conservatory. A beguiling miniature, it is graceful, wistful, and colorful, with highlights of pizzicato and tremolo. The first movement bears an uncanny resemblance to the Serenade from Tchaikovsky’s *First String Quartet*, written twenty years earlier. Both movements feature long, languid falling lines in the main theme and brighter, rising lines in the middle section, marked *Con moto*.

Efrem Zimbalist Sr. was an internationally known concert violinist, composer, teacher, conductor, and director of the Curtis Institute of Music. Born in Russia, by age nine he occupied the first violin chair in his father’s orchestra. Trained under Leopold Auer at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, he went on to become one of the foremost members of the Russian school of virtuoso violinists. He composed a variety of works, including chamber music, vocal works, an opera, and a commercially successful musical comedy, *Honeydew*.

Written in 1932 and revised in 1959, Zimbalist's *String Quartet in E Minor* is imbued with a distinct Russian melancholy. The first movement, set in classical sonata form, is reminiscent of Borodin and Tchaikovsky in its luxurious scope. Its exotic effects and modal harmonies suggest an oriental flavor. The Scherzo, marked *Con brio*, engages with diverse, intricate colors, calling for a sort of raspy attack from the players. The much milder counter theme gives a moment of softness before the *da capo*, rife with strummed effects and syncopations, brings the movement to a close. The slow third movement gives unusual prominence to the second violin and takes on the quality of a lullaby tinged by peripheral counterpoint. The finale scurries past in a kind of whirling *perpetuum mobile*, only to slow down for a poignant series of chorale harmonies just before the final thrust of the conclusion.

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

Upcoming Concerts at the National Gallery of Art

Aron Zelkowicz, cellist
Ryo Yanagitani, pianist

Music by Chopin, Mendelssohn, and Rachmaninoff

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

In honor of African American History Month
and the seventy-fifth anniversary of Marian Anderson's
historic concert at the Lincoln Memorial

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