

Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Fourth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin Concerts

Aphrodite Mitsopoulou, pianist
Music by Chopin, Liszt, Constantinidis,
and Skalkottas. Cosponsored by the
Embassy of Greece for the European
Month of Culture

May 19, Thursday, 12:30

West Building, West Garden Court

Jenny Scheinman's
Kannapolis: A Moving Portrait
Original score accompanying
a documentary

May 22, Sunday, 4:30

East Building Auditorium

Winners of the 2016 Joseph and Goldie
Feder Memorial String Competition
and Misbin Family Memorial Chamber
Music Competition

Presented in cooperation with
Washington Performing Arts

June 5, Sunday, 2:00 and 4:00

West Building, West Garden Court

General Information

Admission to the National Gallery of Art
and all of its programs is free of charge,
except as noted.

The use of cameras or recording equipment
during the performance is not allowed.
Please be sure that all portable electronic
devices are turned off.

Concerts are made possible in part
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74TH SEASON OF CONCERTS

MAY 15, 2016 • NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



PROGRAM

3:30 • West Building, West Garden Court

Ariel Quartet, with Alon Goldstein, piano

Gershon Gerchikov, violin

Alexandra Kazovsky, violin

Jan Grüning, viola

Amit Even-Tov, cello

Alexander Bickard, bass

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Quartet in B-flat Major, op. 76, no. 4, "Sunrise"

Allegro con spirito

Adagio

Menuetto: Allegro

Finale: Allegro, ma non troppo

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1732–1809)

Piano Concerto in D Minor, K. 466

Allegro

Romance

Rondo, allegro assai

Intermission

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Quintet in F Minor, op. 34, for piano and strings

Allegro non troppo

Andante, un poco adagio

Scherzo: Allegro

Finale: Poco sostenuto

Made possible by the Gottesman Fund in memory of Milton M. Gottesman

The Musicians

Characterized by its youth, brilliant playing, and soulful interpretations, the Ariel Quartet has quickly earned a glowing international reputation. The ensemble formed in Israel sixteen years ago when its members were young students. Recently awarded the prestigious Cleveland Quartet Award, the quartet serves as the faculty quartet-in-residence at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music, where they direct the chamber music program and perform their own annual series of concerts.

The Ariel Quartet performs widely in Israel, Europe, and North America, including two record-setting Beethoven cycles last season, performed before any of the quartet members turned thirty. The Ariel continues to astonish with its performances of complete works by memory and has remained committed to performing extensively in Israel. In addition, the Ariel has collaborated with the pianist Orion Weiss, violist Roger Tapping, cellist Paul Katz, and the American and Jerusalem String Quartets. The quartet toured with the cellist Alisa Weilerstein during the 2013–2014 season and performs regularly with the legendary pianist Menahem Pressler.

Formerly the resident ensemble in the New England Conservatory's Professional String Quartet Training Program, the Ariel has won a number of international prizes including the Grand Prize at the 2006 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition and First Prize at the international competition "Franz Schubert and the Music of Modernity" in Graz, Austria, in 2003. The American Record Guide described the Ariel Quartet as "a consummate ensemble gifted with utter musicality and remarkable interpretive power."

The Ariel Quartet has been mentored extensively by Itzhak Perlman, Paul Katz, Donald Weilerstein, Miriam Fried, Kim Kashkashian, and Martha Strongin Katz, among others, and spent a formative year in Basel, Switzerland, to study in-depth with Walter Levin, the founding first violinist of the LaSalle Quartet. The Ariel has received significant scholarship support for the members' studies in the United States from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation, Dov and Rachel Gottesman, and the Legacy Heritage Fund.

Alon Goldstein is one of the most original and sensitive artists of his generation, admired for his musical intelligence and dynamic personality. Goldstein's artistic vision and innovative programming have made him a favorite with audiences and critics throughout the United States, Europe, and Israel. He made his orchestral debut at the age of eighteen with the Israel Philharmonic under the baton of Zubin Mehta, and returned a few seasons ago with Maestro Herbert Blomstedt. In recent seasons Goldstein has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, and other orchestras on tour in Paris, Russia, Romania, and Bulgaria.

Among many memorable recent experiences were nationwide performances with the Tokyo Quartet on their final tour appearances and the premiere *Lost Souls* with the Kansas City Symphony, written for Alon Goldstein by the noted Israeli composer Avner Dorman. Goldstein made his Carnegie Hall debut in the *Mozart Triple Concerto* with Joseph Kalichstein and Shai Wosner, as well giving the world premiere of a concerto by Mark

Kopytman with Avner Biron and the Jerusalem Camerata Orchestra. Goldstein was a featured panelist at a recent conference of the League of American Orchestras discussing his Beethoven concerto cycle with the Rockford Symphony, which expanded the traditional concert experience to a multimedia presentation contextualizing Beethoven's life and work.

Goldstein is the winner of numerous competitions, among them the Arianne Katcz Piano Competition in Tel Aviv, the Nena Wideman Competition in the United States, and the François Shapira Competition in Israel. He is also the recipient of the 2004 Salon de Virtuosi Career Grant and the America-Israel Cultural Foundation Scholarships. Goldstein graduated from the Peabody Institute of Music, where he studied with Leon Fleisher.

Program Notes

The Esterházy family reduced Haydn's annual salary in 1790, as part of a reduction in the princely court's musical forces, but he was graciously freed to perform elsewhere for additional income. In 1791, he accepted an offer to perform and conduct in London, where his concerts were a great success. English composer Charles Burney reported that Haydn "electrified the audience" and excited more attention "than had ever been caused by instrumental music in England." Haydn's London engagements were also extremely lucrative, and he returned for another extended visit in 1794.

Haydn experienced something new during his London visits — concerts that were open to the public in large halls. The contrast between this and his traditional Viennese settings of intimate aristocratic salons was striking. Haydn's creative response can be heard in the grand opus 74 and opus 76 quartets that followed his first and second London visits. These pieces feature attention-catching introductions, accentuated dynamic contrasts, more expressive slow movements, and much virtuoso-part writing.

The *Quartet, op. 76, no. 4*, opens slowly with a rising theme in the first violin that earned it the nickname "Sunrise." After a brief extension of this calm mood, the Allegro con spirito tempo abruptly asserts itself in a cascade of energetic sixteenth notes. The rest of the movement continues as a dramatic back-and-forth between the mood of the quiet opening and that of the following sixteenth-note passage.

The Adagio is one of Haydn's most expressive slow movements, a free fantasia on the opening five notes. After long, melodic lines slowly unfold, an underlying pulse is added that heightens the movement's poignant sense of melancholy. Haydn progressively reshapes the opening motif in a variety of ways as melodic passages swell up and tumble softly down. A single pizzicato note in the cello alerts the audience to a searching canonic passage. The Adagio is followed somewhat comically by the Menuetto's heavy peasant-dance rhythm. The last note of the Menuetto overlaps with the first note of the trio section, whose sustained drones in the viola and cello continue the folk-music effect. The somewhat somber trio falls off quietly, but a return of the bouncy Menuetto restores good feeling.

The unusual finale initially proceeds as a straightforward working of the movement's opening bars. After elaborate harmonization and touches of Haydnesque humor, an emphatic cadence announces what appears to be the quartet's closing. But surprises lie in wait. A rapid cadenza-like musical line opens the coda. After it passes among the instruments, the four voices come together, now marked "even faster." A finale that began as a moderately paced Allegro ends in a virtuoso display at breakneck speed. *Program notes by Robert Strong*

Mozart's *Piano Concerto in D-Minor*, K. 466, was introduced to the world at one of the composer's subscription concerts. The success of the concerto on February 11, 1785 (it had been completed the day before) was considerable, based in no small part on Mozart's playing of the demanding solo. The entire presentation was made additionally notable as the ink was still wet on some of the orchestral parts until an hour before the performance.

While the concerto makes its stormy intentions clear from the get-go, it does not state its principal theme; rather, there are a few bars of murmurous, agitated, syncopated swirlings in the violins and violas, with stabbing cellos and basses, until the tension explodes — for the first of several times in this turbulent music — in a volley for the entire orchestra. The piano creeps in with a quiet, almost frightened-sounding theme, which the orchestra attempts repeatedly to banish. The battle is unceasing, and there is no victor. The tension remains to the end, unresolved (albeit in D minor).

The only thing predictable about the slow movement is that it will provide graceful, lyric contrast. But it does so with qualms. At midpoint, Mozart intrudes on the calm, B-flat song with a cyclonic presto outburst in G minor, jolting listener and performer from their reverie, with the soloist forced to race up and down the keyboard with a degree of virtuosity elsewhere in Mozart restricted to the outer movements of a concerto.

In the finale, the piano announces the theme and then gives way to a rich, long development in the orchestra with fire and fangs, before the reentry of the piano, with some particularly felicitous interchanges with the winds. But menace remains in the air, with no transition to the major; it just happens. The conflict was not going anywhere, only becoming more conflicted. Thus, the conclusion of this most D-minor of concertos is in D major.

Program notes by Herbert Glass

One evening Brahms was asked how he had spent the day. "I was working on my symphony," he replied. "In the morning I added an eighth note. In the afternoon I took it out." Spurious as this anecdote may be, it does furnish some insight into the slow, careful way Brahms fashioned his music and the difficulty he had in bringing certain works up to his incredibly high standards. The piano quintet is a particularly good illustration of a composition that underwent several major revisions before publication.

The original version of the quintet, which Brahms composed in 1862, was for two violins, viola, and two cellos. The following year, Brahms entirely transformed the piece into a sonata for two pianos, which he performed with Karl Tausig in Vienna early in 1864. (Although Brahms burned the original cello quintet version, he preserved the two-piano realization, which is published as opus 34b.) Critics gave it a generally poor reception saying it lacked the necessary warmth and beauty that only string instruments could provide. During the summer of 1864, Brahms reworked the same musical material, this time shaping it into its final piano quintet form. At long last satisfied, the composer allowed it to be published in 1865, and it is now considered his most epic piece of chamber music.

The massive and complex first movement is replete with a superabundance of melodic strains and rhythms. Yet, despite this rich diversity, Brahms achieves a musical synthesis through the use of various unifying techniques that are skillfully woven into the music. For example, the movement opens with piano, first violin, and cello singing the noble,

sonorous first theme. After a pause, the piano begins a passage of running notes that seems unrelated to the opening statement. Careful listening, though, reveals that the passage is nothing more than a free, speeded-up transposition of the melody we have just heard.

The slow movement is serene, tender, and simple, especially in comparison with the majestic sweep of what has come before. With three basic musical ideas, the Scherzo has great rhythmic verve and a plenitude of melodic material. After expanding and developing these themes, the music builds powerfully to a sudden cut-off, which is followed by the contrasting cantabile melody of the trio.

The Finale opens with a slow introduction that casts a mood of dark foreboding. Soon the shadows disperse as the cello saunters forth with a fast, jolly tune. After a dramatic outburst, a second melody appears, slightly faster in tempo, but drooping with feigned sorrow. A vigorous, syncopated theme brings the exposition to an end. The freely realized development and recapitulation lead to the coda, a summing up of the entire movement in an unrestrained whirlwind of orchestral sonority. *Program notes by Melvin Berger*