

Program Notes

One of the most celebrated composers of the twentieth century, Samuel Barber has been described as neo-romantic, combining traditional nineteenth-century music materials with varied contemporary techniques. The elements of Barber's style, in particular his long, lyric lines and the uses of instrumental color and technique, emerged early and didn't change significantly in later years. Perhaps one of his greatest compositions, *Adagio for Strings*, became famous in the orchestral version introduced by Arturo Toscanini in 1938. Yet this classical elegy was first conceived as a string quartet written in 1936. The first movement of the quartet, *Molto allegro e appassionato*, opens with a theme of great dramatic urgency and contains two ideas, both lyrical and songlike. The harsh accents are never far from the surface, and the recapitulation of the opening theme erupts with a power that is almost violent. The music winds down and ends in the same *pianissimo* in which the *Adagio* is about to begin. Here, Barber makes an extremely simple melody, moving in equal quarter notes, and soaring to great heights of expression. The elongated melodies and extended suspensions create a great unresolved harmonic tension that leaves the listener in emotional depths. The melody grows gradually from the delicate opening to a passionate climax and back again to a whispered *pianissimo*. The third movement, *Molto allegro*, begins *attacca* with the return of the turbulent music heard in the first movement, ending the work on an emotional high point.

Born in rural Indiana, Ned Rorem is best known for his art songs and choral music, genres that suit Rorem well as, by his own admission, he tends to conceive of music vocally, giving all his works a distinctly melodic character. *End of Summer* (1985), his three-movement trio for clarinet, violin, and piano, evokes the passing of the seasons and, seemingly, the end of childhood. The first movement, *Capriccio*, begins with a virtuosic cadenza for the solo violin, which serves as the motivic seed for the entire movement once the clarinet and piano join in, alternating between relaxed and hectic moods. This is followed by a free and nostalgic *Fantasy*, in the tempo of "falling leaves," up until the movement's tense climax and subtle release. The third movement is a *Mazurka*, the triple-meter Polish dance made famous by Chopin. Here Rorem brushes off Chopin's genteel veneer to evoke the rough-edged spirit of the rustic peasant dance itself, which ebbs and flows in intensity — at times dizzyingly virtuosic and then touchingly melodic — before its abrupt end.

Program notes provided by the American Youth Philharmonic Orchestras

75TH SEASON OF CONCERTS

FEBRUARY 4, 2017 • NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



PROGRAM

2:00 • West Building, East Garden Court

The Querencia Quartet

Samuel Barber (1910–1981)

String Quartet in B Minor, op. 11

Molto allegro e appassionato

Molto adagio

Molto allegro

The Ensemble da Camera of Washington

Ned Rorem (b. 1923)

The End of Summer

Capriccio

Fantasy

Mazurka

Strings of the American Youth Philharmonic

Christopher Zimmerman, conductor

Samuel Barber

Adagio for Strings

The Musicians

The American Youth Philharmonic Orchestras (AYPO) is a program consisting of five orchestras and harp, flute, and percussion ensembles. With a nationally recognized artistic staff, a dedicated professional staff, and a host of volunteers, AYPO annually selects and trains more than four hundred talented young musicians in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area.

The AYPO Chamber Ensemble Program is for talented musicians who participate in one of AYPO's advanced orchestras: the American Youth Symphonic Orchestra or the American Youth Philharmonic. The program gives musicians the opportunity to enhance their musical development by studying and performing chamber music under the guidance of professional instructors. The acclaimed Ensemble da Camera of Washington is AYPO's ensemble-in-residence and coaches each group of student musicians and leads public master classes throughout the season.

Founded in 1990, the Ensemble da Camera of Washington is among the country's finest ensembles in its configuration. These internationally acclaimed musicians have performed throughout the United States to outstanding reviews. Admired for their remarkable homogeneity, style, and virtuosity, their programs include works covering four centuries of music from solo compositions to duos and trios. Their recordings for the Vernissage Records label were received with unanimous praise from radio and print critics, including WETA, the *Washington Post*, *Fanfare*, *Clarinet*, *Classical Pulse*, and *High Performance* magazines, and the *American Record Guide*. The ensemble also has commissioned new works for its combination and has premiered trios by the American composers Richard Faith and Michael Hersch, and presented the Washington, DC, premiere of the *Leaves from an Autumn Album* by Russian composer R. Riabov.

The Querencia Quartet

Calvin Liu and Annika Hsu, violins

Ella Wood, viola

Caley Koch, cello

Ensemble da Camera of Washington

Claire Eichhorn, clarinet

Ricardo Cyncynates, violin

Anna Balakerskaia, piano

Strings of the American Youth Philharmonic

Violin I

Juliana Layendecker, concertmaster,

Amelia Bailey, Eugene Choo,

Shannon Chu, Adam Kim,

Jisoo Lee, Calvin Liu, and

Yukino Takehara

Violin II

Jasper de Boor, Caitlyn Clingenpeel,

Annika Hsu, Emily Kassab,

Minseon Kim, Michelle Li,

Sam Panner, and George Pekarsky

Viola

Jay Do, Betelihem Hadgu,

Ryan Lee, Isabelle Lesmana,

Somerset Peede, and Ella Wood

Cello

Heeyun Jeon, Caley Koch,

Allison Park, and Won Seok Song

Bass

Andrew Gantzer, Nick Jacky,

Sam Koch, and Conor Moran