



The Sixty-seventh Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,700th Concert

National Gallery String Quartet
Claudia Chudacoff and Teri Lazar, *violin*
Osman Kivrak, *viola*
Diana Fish, *cello*
With
Menahem Pressler, *pianist*

January 4, 2009
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Performed without intermission

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Piano Quartet in G Minor, K. 478 (1785)

Allegro

Andante

Rondo

Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Piano Quintet in E-flat Major, op. 44 (1842)

Allegro brillante

In modo d'una Marcia: Un poco largamente

Scherzo: Molto vivace

Finale: Allegro ma non troppo

The Musicians

MENACHEM PRESSLER

Menachem Pressler has firmly established himself as one of the world's most accomplished and honored musicians, whose distinguished career spans more than five decades. (His first concert at the National Gallery took place in 1953). His skills as a chamber and solo performer have brought him to all of the world's major cultural capitals. His musical precision and knowledge of piano and chamber music literature have also earned him an international reputation as a remarkable teacher.

Born in Magdeburg, Germany, in 1923, Pressler received most of his musical training in Israel, to which his family, fleeing the Nazis, immigrated in 1939. He holds honorary doctoral degrees from both the University of Nebraska and the University of Kansas. In 1994 he was honored with Chamber Music America's Distinguished Service Award, and in 1998 he received the prestigious Gramophone Lifetime Achievement Award. Elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in October 2000, Pressler has also received England's Record of the Year Award, four Grammy nominations, Musical America's Ensemble of the Year in 1997 with the Beaux Arts Trio, and the German Recording Award. In addition to over fifty recordings with the Beaux Arts Trio, Pressler has produced more than thirty solo recordings of works by a wide range of composers, from Bach to Ben Haim.

In 1955 Pressler cofounded the Beaux Arts Trio with Daniel Guilet and Bernard Greenhouse. It became one of the most enduring and widely acclaimed chamber music ensembles of modern times, and has been credited with giving rise to the enormous popularity of the piano trio repertoire. The trio had its final performance at Tanglewood—where it had performed its debut in 1955—on August 21, 2008.

When not on tour, giving solo performances, or teaching master classes, Pressler can be found in his studio at Indiana University in Bloomington, where he holds the rank of distinguished professor. He appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Melvin Kaplan, Inc., of Burlington, Vermont.

NATIONAL GALLERY STRING QUARTET

The National Gallery String Quartet has performed regularly at the Gallery since its debut in 1995. In addition to standard quartet repertoire, the group presents rarely-heard masterpieces of chamber music. The musicians also perform under the name Sunrise Quartet, and in that capacity they have been recognized with a Chamber Music America residency at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts as well as with residencies at the Concerts at the Beach in Delaware and the Davies Concert Series in Camp Springs, Maryland. With perfectly matched skills, the first and second violinists are able to change places, a practice that is rare among string quartets.

Violinist Claudia Chudacoff appears frequently as a soloist and chamber musician in the Baltimore-Washington area. In addition to her position as the newly-appointed concertmaster of the U.S. Marine Band's White House Chamber Orchestra, Chudacoff is the concertmaster of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra and the National Gallery Orchestra. A member of both the Sunrise Quartet and the National Gallery String Quartet, she has performed regularly in numerous venues and concert series in Washington, DC, including the Contemporary Music Forum, the Embassy Series, the Fessenden Ensemble, the Holocaust Memorial, and National Musical Arts. She is featured on an Albany Records CD of chamber music by Erich Korngold, and was recently seen in a broadcast for West Virginia public television with the Sunrise Quartet. She has also been heard a number of times on American Public Media's *Performance Today*.

Violinist Teri Lazar has performed as a soloist and chamber musician in Europe and the Middle East as well as in the United States. She is the concertmaster of the Virginia Chamber Orchestra and performs with the Richmond Chamber Players and in Currents, a chamber music series also based in Richmond. She earned a doctor of music degree from The Catholic University of America and teaches violin at American University, where she is a musician in residence. Lazar has recorded chamber music for the Albany, Centaur, Klavier, and North/South Consonance labels and has been heard on American Public Media's *Performance Today*.

Violist Osman Kivrak is a winner of the National Scholarship Competition in Turkey and the Baltimore Chamber Music Awards. He has performed at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina, and has toured Italy and other parts of Europe as a chamber musician. He performs with the Richmond Chamber Players and in Currents, and teaches at American University as a musician in residence. A graduate of The Catholic University of America, where he earned a doctor of music degree, Kivrak is a composer as well as a performer. His compositions were recently recognized with awards from the Maryland State Arts Council and the Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission.

Cellist Diana Fish came to Washington, DC, in 1994 to become a member of the Marine Chamber Orchestra of “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band, in which she currently serves as assistant principal cellist. She graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with Orlando Cole, and continued her work at the graduate level at Indiana University, where she studied with Janos Starker. Fish has been the principal cellist of Concert Artists of Baltimore, with whom she performed as soloist in Beethoven’s *Triple Concerto* for piano, violin, and cello. She has also appeared as soloist with the Marine Chamber Orchestra in Victor Herbert’s *Cello Concerto in E Minor*. A charter member of the Sunrise Quartet and the National Gallery Chamber Players String Quartet, Fish has been performing with both ensembles for the past fourteen years.

Program Notes

When Mozart was commissioned to write three piano quartets in 1785 by his publisher-friend Franz Anton Hoffmeister, the piano quartet was a relatively unheard-of idiom. Mozart tackled the new challenge by scoring for doubled instruments, with the strings and the piano alternating as the prominent tone color. The technical challenges of the piece made it too difficult for amateurs to play, with the result that it did not sell well. Hoffmeister paid Mozart for the *Quartet in G Minor* according to their agreement, but did not ask him to complete the commission for a second or third piano quartet.

Mozart used the G minor key for his most dramatic works, and this piece is no exception. The striking opening passage, for all four instruments, sets the tone for the first movement. Filled with virtuosic piano writing, the *Allegro* is alternately agitated and lyrical, concluding with another strong unison passage. Cast in the relative major key—B-flat, the second movement (*Andante*) continues the unsettled feeling established in the first movement. The spirited *Rondo* returns to G major, and despite several dips into the darker keys of G minor and E minor, it is playful and bright.

Written in 1842 (the year that later became known as Robert Schumann's "year of chamber music"), the *Piano Quintet in E-flat Major*, op. 44, is probably the first of its kind, and is still considered to be among the best ever written. After having completed three string quartets in the same year, Schumann took things a step further and decided to add his own instrument, the piano, to the mix. The dedicatee and first pianist to play it in public was his beloved wife, Clara Wieck Schumann, who was a gifted concert pianist. The quintet was a great success, and served to validate Schumann as a composer of note in the eyes of his contemporaries.

The first movement begins with a strong, declamatory statement, which is expanded upon rhythmically and harmonically in true classical sonata form. The march of the second movement is best described as a funeral march with a slightly brighter second theme. The *Scherzo* is Mendelssohnian in style, filled with ascending and descending scales. It contains two contrasting trios.

Starting unexpectedly in the relative minor key, the final movement concludes the work grandly, as it presents periods of lyricism and great agitation and a double fugue as the coda.

Program notes by Danielle DeSwert

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

Ma'alot Quintet

Stephanie Winker, *flutist*
Ulf-Guido Schäfer, *clarinetist*
Christian Wetzel, *oboist*
Volker Tessmann, *bassoonist*
Volker Grewel, *horn*

Music by Barber, Mendelssohn, Piazzolla, and other composers

Presented in conjunction with "Mendelssohn on the Mall"

This concert will be preceded by a preconcert talk
on Mendelssohn and the visual arts

Sunday, January 11, 2009
Preconcert talk at 6:00 pm
West Building Lecture Hall
Concert at 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

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.

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