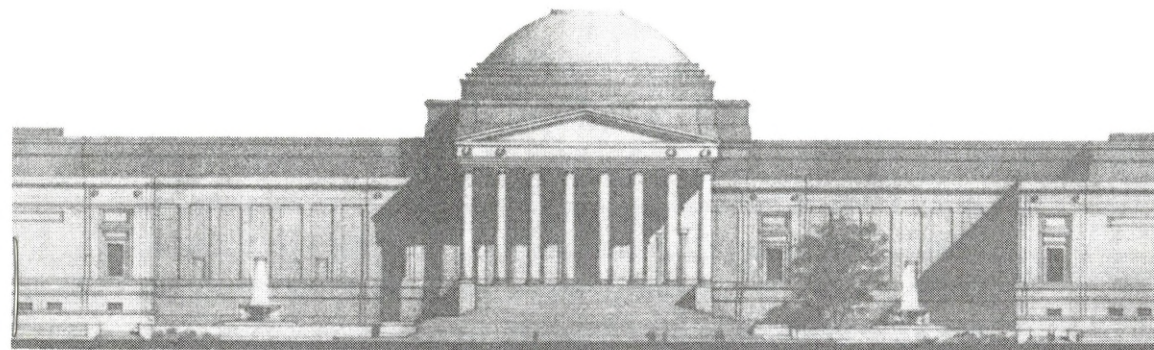


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Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

www.nga.gov

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

National Gallery of Art
2,951st Concert

National Gallery of Art Chamber Players

Presented in collaboration with the
Delegation of the European Union to the United States

May 29, 2013
Wednesday, 12:10 pm
East Building Auditorium

Admission free

Program

Steven Joseph Psaila (Maltese, b. 1984)

Waves

Ilona Brege (Latvian, b. 1959)

Barefoot Soul

Arvo Pärt (Estonian, b. 1935)

Spiegel im Spiegel (Mirrors in a Mirror)

Jacques Brel (Belgian, 1929–1978)

Ne me Quitte Pas

Bruxelles

Amsterdam

La Bouree du Celibataire

Au Printemps

Django Reinhardt (Belgian-born French, 1910–1953)

Nuages (Clouds)

Dušan Martinček (Slovak, 1936–2006)

Sonatina No. 1

Marcel Wengler (Luxembourgish, b. 1946)

Hundert Takte Walzer

The Musicians

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART CHAMBER PLAYERS

Consisting primarily of small ensembles from within the National Gallery of Art Orchestra, members of the National Gallery of Art Chamber Players have provided appropriate chamber music in conjunction with a number of recent Gallery exhibitions, including music by nineteenth-century French and Belgian composers in honor of *The Darker Side of Light: Arts of Privacy, 1850–1900* (2009); Renaissance Spanish music in honor of *The Art of Power: Royal Armor and Portraits from Imperial Spain* (2009); Music by Gershwin, Joplin, and Milhaud in honor of *From Impressionism to Modernism: The Chester Dale Collection* (2011); and music for silent films from Catalonia in honor of Joan Miró: *The Ladder of Escape* (2012). Chamber Players participating in tonight's concert are violinist Bruno Nasta, percussionist Mark Carson, and pianist Danielle DeSwert Hahn.

Program Notes

This afternoon's concert concludes a series generated by the Delegation of the European Union to the United States in collaboration with the National Gallery of Art and the Katzen Arts Center at American University, the Kennedy Center, and the Phillips Collection. Dubbing the month of May as "The European Month of Culture," the Delegation has presented twenty-nine concerts in the above-mentioned venues, representing all twenty-seven countries in the European Union. In this program, Belgium and France are represented by composers as well as by Belgian-born American pianist Danielle DeSwert Hahn, while each of five other EU countries—Estonia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, and Slovakia—is represented by a composer.

A music teacher at Saint Benedict's College and the Johann Strauss School of Music, Steven Joseph Psaila started studying piano with Antoinette Berg at the age of six. He graduated from the University of Malta with a degree in music studies, specializing in musicology and composition. He has written a number of short works for strings and piano, as well as sacred and liturgical compositions. Psaila expresses his love for nature in compositions such as *The Storm* and *Whispering Winds*, which were premiered by the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra in February 2011. He has also composed works for voice and chamber orchestra, including *The Forsaken*, based on a poem by William Wordsworth. Psaila's interest in poetry inspired him to compose an orchestral suite, *Katrin Tal-Imdina*, based on the poem by Dwardu Cachia (1857–1907). The work garnered first place in the Second National Music Competition for Maltese composers, organised by APS Bank. Of *Waves*, the composer writes: "...[it] is composed with a different picture in mind, specifically, sunset on the beautiful beaches of Malta. One must not forget, though the sea may seem calm, deep below something perilous may be brewing, harboring power of incalculable proportions and this is heard during the climax of the piece. The melody, which is sometimes hidden, portrays the mystical nature of the sea with all its hidden treasure."

Composer, pianist, and musicologist Ilona Brege graduated from the Latvian Music Academy in Riga with doctoral degrees in piano and composition. Resident pianist of the Latvian Philharmonic Orchestra, she subsequently served as a researcher at the Latvian Science Academy, specializing in art, folklore, and literature. In 2006 she was appointed general manager of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra and managing director of the Riga Professional Symphonic Band.

Born in Paide, Järva County, Estonia, Arvo Pärt spent his formative years in an environment in which Estonian composers had ready access only to musical influences from inside the Soviet Union, with the exception of a few illegal tapes and scores. Determined to exercise greater intellectual freedom, Pärt left his native country in 1980 with his wife and two sons. After a year in Vienna, Austria, he found a home in Germany and lived and worked there for twenty years. In 2001 he returned to Estonia, which had in the meantime become a welcoming environment for innovative intellectuals, and now maintains homes in both Tallinn and Berlin.

Since the late 1970s, Pärt has worked in a minimalist style that often draws inspiration from Gregorian chant and employs a compositional technique that he originated—*tintinnabuli*—in which two voices interact, one (dubbed the "tintinnabular voice") arpeggiating the tonic triad, and the other moving diatonically in stepwise motion. *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978) is one of his first works to use *tintinnabuli*. Originally written for violin and piano, it has often been performed by other combinations of instruments. The piano provides the arpeggiated triads, and the violin plays alternately rising and falling diatonic scales, all of which end on the note A. A form of musical punctuation is provided by low notes in the piano, responding in syncopation to the violin part. *Spiegel im Spiegel* (Mirrors in a Mirror) refers to the infinity of images produced by parallel plane mirrors. The infinite reflections are represented in music by the endlessly repeated triads with minimal variations.

An internationally popular singer and songwriter whose style was marked by stark lyrics and emotional performances, Jacques Brel is widely considered a master of the modern chanson. Although he recorded most of his

songs in French, he became a major influence on English-speaking songwriters and performers such as Marc Almond, David Bowie, Leonard Cohen, and Rod McKuen. English translations of his songs were recorded by many top performers in the United States, including Ray Charles, Judy Collins, John Denver, the Kingston Trio, Frank Sinatra, and Andy Williams. In French-speaking countries, Brel was also a successful actor, appearing in ten films. He also directed two films, one of which, *Le Far West*, was nominated for the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 1973.

Regarded as one of the greatest guitarists of all time, Django Reinhardt was the first European jazz musician to have had a lasting impact on the genre. He invented an entirely new style of jazz guitar playing (sometimes called hot jazz guitar) that has since become a living musical tradition within French Gypsy culture. At age eighteen, he was injured in a fire that ravaged the caravan he shared with his first wife. Even though his family and neighbors were quick to pull him to safety, he received first- and second-degree burns over half his body. His right leg was paralyzed and the third and fourth fingers of his left hand were badly burned. As his burns healed, Django started to relearn his craft in a completely new way, even as his third and fourth fingers remained partially paralyzed. He played all of his guitar solos with only two fingers, and used the two injured digits only for chord work.

Reinhardt played and recorded with many American jazz musicians, including Benny Carter, Dizzy Gillespie, and Rex Stewart, and participated in a jam-session and radio performance with Louis Armstrong. After about fifteen years in the international spotlight, Reinhardt began to revert to his Gypsy life style, having found it difficult to adjust to the modern world. He would sometimes show up for concerts without a guitar or amp, or wander off to the park or beach when he was supposed to be at a theater, and on a few occasions he refused even to get out of bed. During this period he did, however, frequently attend an artistic salon in Montmartre known as R-26, improvising with his devoted collaborator, jazz violinist Stéphane Grappelli (1908–1997).

Prominent Slovak pianist, pedagogue, and composer of contemporary classical music Dušan Martinček studied piano in Bratislava at the Conservatory and the School of Musical Arts. A student of composition under Jan

Cikker, Martinček completed his studies in 1961. He remained at the university as an assistant, and spent most of his life as a university teacher, becoming a professor in 1986. At the same time, he worked on his own compositions and performed as concert pianist both home and abroad. He composed mostly piano and chamber music, in addition to several symphonic works.

Born in Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg, composer, guitarist, and conductor Marcel Wengler studied at the Conservatoire Royal de Musique in Brussels and the Musikhochschule in Cologne, where his teachers were Igor Markevitch and Sergiu Celibidache. From 1972 to 1997, he headed the Conservatoire de Luxembourg, and since 2000 he has served as director of the Luxembourg Music Information Center. His compositions include symphonies, concertos, chamber music, and musicals.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the waltz was a fairly subdued dance in 3/4 time, a descendant of the slow, countrified *Ländler*. As the century progressed, the expected tempo of the waltz increased, and the dancers and players came to feel the rhythm as one pulse per measure. In 1900 waltz tempo was officially clocked at 100 measures per minute (“hundert Takte pro Minute” in German). Wengler published his brief waltz with this playful reference to music history in its title and an equally playful poem:

Take 150 g of flour, 6 eggs and 100 g sugar,
and don't forget a pinch of salt; do not use schmaltz* or lard,
but 100 g of best butter.
Bake the special birthday cake in the oven for about an hour
for a birthday celebration in good company.
Recommended accompanying music: Hundert Takte Walzer,
played with a light touch: But caution: stumbling is guaranteed!

*schmalz has two meanings in German: 1) chicken fat; 2) overly sentimental interpretation of music

Program notes by Stephen Ackert, head, music department, National Gallery of Art