

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.

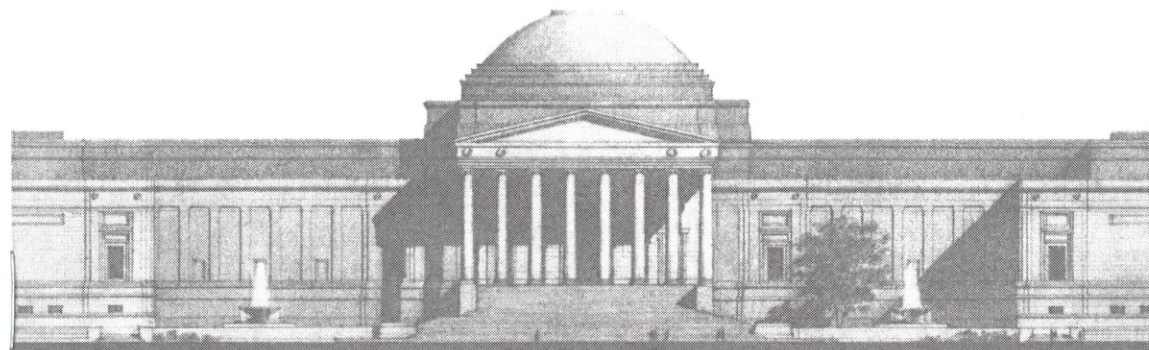
Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

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

Concerts are made possible in part through the generosity of donors to the National Gallery of Art through The Circle. Reserved seating is available in recognition of their support. Please contact the development office at (202) 842-6450 or circle@nga.gov for more information.



The Seventy-Third Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
3,019th Concert

Alexander Shonert, violinist
Natalia Shonert, pianist

Presented in collaboration with the
Mutual Inspirations Festival and with assistance
from the Embassy of the Czech Republic

October 26, 2014
Sunday, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Antonin Dvořák (1841–1904)

Slavonic Dance in E Minor, op. 46

Alexander Shonert (b. 1972)

Fantasy Dedicated to F. Kafka for violin solo

Jaromir Vogel (b. 1943)

Menora

Piotr Illyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Meditation, op. 42, no. 1

Humoresque, op. 10, no. 2

Shonert

Fantasy Inspired by the Sephardic Melody Noches-Noches

Shonert

The Wind

Rodion Shchedrin (b. 1932)

Quasi Albéniz

INTERMISSION

Ernest Bloch (1880–1959)

Baal Shem

Vyacheslav Grokhovsky (b. 1945)

Jewish Melodies in a Fantasia

Shonert

Fantasy Inspired by Karel Hašler's Melodies

Bedřich Smetana (1842–1884)

Vltava

The Musicians

ALEXANDER SHONERT

A graduate of the Novosibirsk Russian State Conservatory, Russian-born violinist Alexander Shonert is known for his emotionally rich tone, intensity of feeling, and the originality of his interpretations and improvisations. He has received many honors, including Laureate of the Berlin International Competition (2003), the World prize of Antonin Dvořák (2001), and the European Prize of Gustav Mahler (2001). Since 1999, Shonert has made the musical city of Prague his home, and has represented both the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation at cultural events, including the 2009 convention of the European Commission in Brussels. In recognition of his substantial contribution to Czech culture, he received the right of dual citizenship.

Active as a soloist and guest performer with orchestras throughout Europe, Shonert has played frequently in the United States since 2005. Among the wide variety of musicians with whom he has collaborated are the popular Russian jazz pianist Leonid Ptashka and Ilya and Alina Levinsky, with whom he appears as Trio Di Levone. In recent years, Shonert has developed and refined a concert program titled "Alexander Shonert Plays the Jewish Classics and Gershwin," which he performs as a duo with his mother, pianist Natalia Shonert.

A popular and successful educator, Shonert administers his own music school in Prague, employing the best teaching traditions of the Russian violin school. Graduates of his academy play in various orchestras in Europe, Russia, and the United States. Alexander Shonert plays a violin by the renowned contemporary Czech violin maker Petr Zdražil.

NATALIA SHONERT

Born in Irkutsk, Russia, Natalia Shonert studied piano at that city's musical college and the Eastern Siberian State Academy of Culture and Arts, where she subsequently taught as a member of the faculty. Since 1999, she has lived in Prague, where she collaborates with classical and opera singers and has established her own school of piano, graduating many young players who have gone on to prominence. Shonert has performed for the Czech Parliament, for Czech Television, and at Bertramka (Mozart's preferred residence while in Prague). In recognition of her artistic achievement and service to the Czech Republic, she was awarded The Rudolf II Prize, bestowed by the Masaryk Academy of Art in Prague.

Program Notes

This evening's concert is one event in the 2014 Mutual Inspirations Festival, sponsored by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington, DC, and focused on the life and work of Franz Kafka. In presenting music from the Czech Jewish heritage, the musicians recreate, insofar as possible, the author's musical environment. On first examination, Kafka's writings might suggest that he had no abiding interest in music or a sense of its power. He didn't play an instrument, and he once admitted to his friend Max Brod that he "couldn't tell the difference between *The Merry Widow* and *Tristan and Isolde*." After attending a concert of Brahms's chamber music, he made the following entry in his diary (along with a penned portrait of three clerics who had sat in a box near his): "The essence of my unmusicalness consists in my inability to enjoy music connectedly. It only now and then has an effect on me, and how seldom it is a musical one."

But a deeper search in Kafka's oeuvre shows that he shared with three contemporary composers—Dvořák, Janáček, and Mahler—a distinctively Eastern European tendency to refer back to folk memory to establish identity and positive values. In Kafka's case this was Jewish folk memory. In his unfinished novel *Amerika*, for example, he attributes the ability to play standard classics on the piano to a character who is bourgeois and conventional, but in the earlier work *Metamorphosis*, he treats Grete's unsophisticated renditions of folk tunes on the violin much more sympathetically: "Her face was leant to one side, following the lines of music with a careful and melancholy expression." In his last short story, "Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk," Kafka cites music as the essence of religious impulse, one that links a congregation with the sacerdotal through the agency of song. Music and musical activity as a metaphor appear repeatedly throughout his work, attesting to their subconscious and often enigmatic effect on him.

*Program Notes by Stephen Ackert, Senior Music Program Advisor,
National Gallery of Art*

Upcoming Concerts at the National Gallery of Art

Prague Philharmonic Choir
Music by Brahms and Dvořák

October 31, 2014
Friday, 3:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court



Francisco Bernier, guitarist
Music by De Narváez, Sor, and other composers

In honor of *El Greco in the National Gallery of Art
and Washington-Area Collections: A 400th Anniversary Celebration*

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



National Gallery of Art New Music Ensemble
Music by Antosca and Oliver

November 16, 2014
Sunday, 3:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court