

Shostakovich turned to the medium of the string quartet in the mid-1930s, as the Communist Party intensified its close scrutiny and frequent criticism of his symphonies and works for the stage. The string quartet medium provided an abstract world in which the composer could express himself in purely musical terms. It was also a medium which was too subtle for most of the Party officials who were supposed to approve or disapprove of new Soviet music. The quartets went largely unchallenged, even though some of them contained themes from earlier works that had been banned by the same officials.

The statesman, art collector, and amateur violinist, Count Andrey Razumovsky (1752-1836,) was the Russian ambassador to the Habsburg Court in Vienna when he first heard the music of Beethoven. Razumovsky was so taken with Beethoven's music that he subsidized a string quartet and instructed it to give frequent performances of the young German composer's music. Eventually he commissioned a set of three quartets, which became Beethoven's *Opus 59* and have come to be known as the "*Razumovsky*" *Quartets*. The third quartet, which we hear this evening, is the only one that does not honor the patron by quoting a traditional Russian tune, but it does him even greater honor by surpassing in power and subtlety every string quartet that had been written before it.

CONCERTS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART  
Under the Direction of George Manos

JUNE 1997

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| 22 | Gordon Fergus-Thompson,<br><i>pianist</i>                        | Schumann: <i>Papillons, Opus 2</i><br>Scriabin: <i>Sonata, Opus 23</i><br>Ravel: <i>Gaspard de la nuit</i>          |
| 29 | Jeffrey Solow, <i>cellist</i><br>Doris Stevenson, <i>pianist</i> | Bach: <i>Sonata No. 2 in D Major</i><br>George Walker: <i>Sonata (1957)</i><br>Joaquin Nin: <i>Chants d'Espagne</i> |

(Last concert of the season)

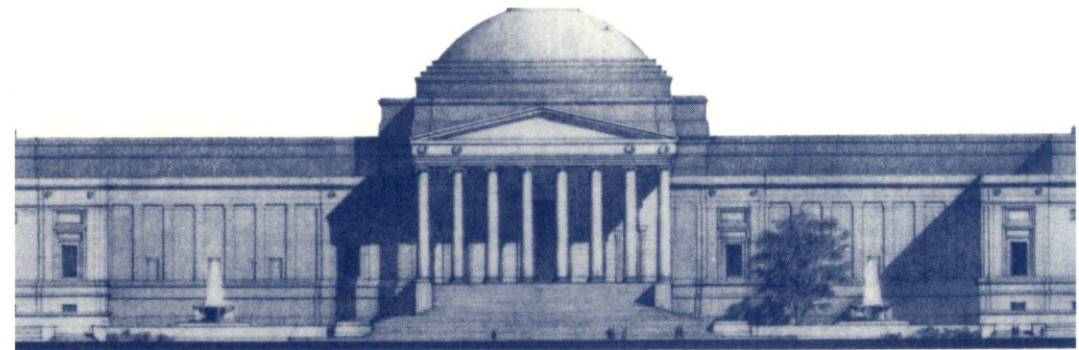
*Concerts at the National Gallery of Art resume  
on October 5, 1997 with a performance by  
the National Gallery Orchestra, George Manos, conductor.*

*For the convenience of concertgoers  
the Garden Café remains open until 6:30 p.m.*

*The Fifty-fifth Season of*

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and  
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



*2237th Concert*

NATIONAL GALLERY CHAMBER PLAYERS

STRING QUARTET

GEORGE MANOS, *Artistic Director*

CLAUDIA CHUDACOFF, *violin* ERIC deWAARDT, *viola*

MARGARET SOPER GUTIERREZ, *violin*

DIANA FISH, *violoncello*

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Sunday Evening, June 15, 1997  
at Seven O'clock  
West Building, West Garden Court

*Admission Free*

