It was not unusual for Mozart to rework an already completed composition, as he did in the case of the *Viola Quintet in C Minor, K.* 406. It appeared originally as his *Serenade for Winds, K. 388*. The musicologist and Mozart biographer, Alfred Einstein, maintains that Mozart planned to submit a set of six viola quintets to Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia, in hopes of receiving a further commission or a court appointment. Even though the composer accelerated the process of completing six works by changing an extant work into a viola quintet, there is no evidence that the full project ever came to fruition. In spite of the reduction from eight parts in the *Serenade* to five in the *Quintet*, the work is perfectly suited to the smaller medium and projects great power.

After a stark, ominous opening passage in unison, the first movement of the quintet proceeds with four distinct motives, corresponding to the following characteristics: beseeching, defiant, flirtatious, and stubborn. The second movement moves to the major mode, and its tranquility eases the tensions that were built up by the first movement. The third movement, a minuet, reveals Mozart's potential for astounding contrapuntal writing. Once the melody has been subject to numerous intricate contrapuntal treatments in the minuet, the *Trio in rovescio (Trio in Reverse)* presents the melody both in its original form and its inversion. The final movement begins, as did the first, with a sober theme. The theme is subject to seven variations, in each of which it becomes progressively more obscure. The seventh variation carries the work to a depth of chromatic anguish, but its positive mood is restored by a glistening coda.

Prokofiev had already been actively composing for fifteen years when in 1924 he wrote the music now known as his *Quintet*, *Opus 39*. However, he had little success up to that time in selling his scores, which were too traditional for the Paris publishers, and too unconventional for those in New York. In need of funds, he accepted a commission to write the music for a ballet about the circus, *Trapeze*, for a small traveling dance company. The company soon folded, and the music would have been completely forgotten had not Prokofiev reworked it into a quintet.

Stylistically related to his *Second Symphony*, which also dates from 1924, the quintet has six movements, the first of which calls to mind the antics of clowns, with the woodwinds tumbling over one another. Each of the successive movements features an unusual acoustical effect, with special emphasis on the possibilities of the double bass in the second, fourth, fifth, and sixth movements.

The artistry of clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld (1856-1907) was a great inspiration for Brahms, who in 1891 wrote two major works with Mühlfeld in mind: the *Trio in A Minor, Opus 114*, and the *Quintet, Opus 115*. In a letter to his friend Eusebius Mandyczeweski, the ever self-deprecating Brahms referred to the latter as a "piece of foolishness" that he was trying to "nurse along." The work, to the contrary, is a masterpiece in its genre, displaying the clarinet's most telling effects, from the high wail of its *clarino* register to the dark, romantic shades of its low *chalumeau* range. On the occasion of the quintet's first performance on 12 December 1891 in Berlin, Mühlfeld was the clarinetist, with the Joachim Quartet providing the other four parts.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

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

Selections from concerts at the Gallery can be heard on the second Sunday of each month at 9:00 p.m. on WGMS, 103.5 FM.

The Fifty-ninth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2355th Concert

NEW YORK CHAMBER SOLOISTS

Allen Blustine, clarinet Helen Kwalwasser, violin Ynez Lynch, viola

clarinet Melvin Kaplan, oboe
r, violin Michael Roth, violin and viola
h, viola Matthew Herren, cello
Lisa Chin, double bass

Sunday Evening, 1 October 2000 Seven O'clock West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

PROGRAM

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Viola Quintet in C Minor K. 406 (1787)

Allegro Andante

Menuetto in canone; trio al rovescio

Allegro

Sergey Prokofiev (1891–1953)

Quintet for Oboe, Clarinet, Violin, Viola, and Double Bass (1924)

Moderato: Tema con variatione

Andante energico

Allegro sostenuto ma con brio

Adagio pesante

Allegro precipitato, ma non troppo presto

Andantino

INTERMISSION

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Quintet in B Minor Op. 115 (1891)

Allegro Adagio

Andantino; presto non assai, ma con sentimento

Con moto

Since 1957 the New York Chamber Soloists have been acclaimed as an outstanding ensemble of distinguished virtuosi, performing widely diverse repertoire in creatively programmed concerts. Eleven musicians make up the core ensemble of strings, winds, and keyboard. In response to the demands of the repertoire, the Chamber Soloists, with the help of guest artists, have increased their number to as many as twenty. This flexibility has allowed the group to perform many works that are seldom heard, owing to the unusual instrumental combinations for which they were written. The Chamber Soloists' programming innovations have included Bach's complete Brandenburg Concerti in a single concert; the complete Mozart horn concerti; and song cycles, cantatas, and operas from Claudio Monteverdi to Hugh Aitken. The ensemble has appeared at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Library of Congress, and at the Mostly Mozart, Sun Valley, and Caramoor Festivals. The New York Chamber Soloists appear at the National Gallery by arrangement with Melvin Kaplan, Inc., of Burlington, Vermont.

Allen Blustine is one of New York's busiest and most versatile clarinetists. He has performed with a broad spectrum of musical organizations, including the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He teaches at Columbia University.

For more than twenty-five years, **Melvin Kaplan**, founder and oboist of the New York Chamber Soloists, has been one of the nation's most influential figures in chamber music. As a soloist, he premiered works by Ralph Vaughan Williams, Ezra Laderman, Hugh Aitken, Karl Korte, and William Sydeman. He is a regular lecturer and performer at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and was on the faculty of the Juilliard School for more than twenty years.

Violinist **Helen Kwalwasser** has concertized throughout North and South America and Europe as a soloist and chamber musician. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and the Juilliard School, she has played with the Pennsylvania Ballet Orchestra, the Princeton Chamber Orchestra, the American Chamber Orchestra, and the Galimir Quartet. She is professor of violin at Temple University, from which she received the Creative Achievement Award in 1984.

Violinist **Michael Roth** is a member of both the American Composers Orchestra and the New Orchestra of Westchester, Connecticut, and a former member of the critically acclaimed Oberlin Piano Trio. A graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, he taught at the University of Massachusetts, where he received the Julian Olvesky Award. A regular participant in the Aspen, Tanglewood, Saratoga, and Vermont Mozart Festivals, he currently teaches at the Westchester Conservatory of Music.

Violist **Inez Lynch** is a charter member of the Chamber Soloists. She has appeared as soloist with the Musica Aeterna Orchestra and the Festival Orchestra of New York and has performed with the Fine Arts and Emerson String Quartets. She was a member of the original cast for the ground-breaking New York Pro Musica production and recording of *The Play of Daniel*.

Cellist **Matthew Herren** has appeared in chamber music and recital performances throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, France, and Italy. The long list of festivals at which he has performed includes Ravinia, Sarasota, New York's Alice Tully, and Philadelphia's Mozart on the Square. A founding member of the Concertante Chamber Ensemble, the Yellowstone Music Festival, and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, he serves as principal cellist with the Manhattan Chamber Orchestra.

Double bassist **Lisa Chin** graduated from the Manhattan School of Music in 1996. In 1997 she toured Europe with the American Institute of Musical Studies Festival Orchestra and participated in the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences' "Grammys in the Schools" program. She has performed with the Riverside Symphony, the Allentown, Pennsylvania, Symphony, the Seoul Symphony of New York, and the Manhattan Virtuosi.