

1999th Concert

March 10, 1991

GRANT JOHANNESSEN, *pianist*

PROGRAM

J. S. Bach Prelude and Fugue in A Minor
(1685-1750) BWV 894

Franz Schubert "Grazer" Fantasie
(1797-1828) D. 605a (c. 1818)

Robert Schumann Faschingsschwank aus Wien
(1810-1856) Opus 26 (1839-40)

Allegro
Romanze
Scherzino
Intermezzo
Finale

INTERMISSION
(*Twelve Minutes*)

Sergey Rachmaninoff, arr. Earl Wilde Three Songs
In the Silent Night
The Little Island
Where Beauty Dwells

Gabriel Fauré Two Impromptus
(1845-1924)
No. 3 in A-flat Major, Opus 34
No. 5 in F-sharp Major, Opus 102

Claude Debussy *Hommage à Rameau from Images*
(1862-1918) (1905)
Soirée dans Grenade from Estampes
L'Isle joyeuse

Exactly forty years and one month have passed since Grant Johannesen's first appearance as recitalist at the National Gallery. In February 1951, just at the beginning of his career, Mr. Johannesen played a program that included Beethoven's *Sonata, Opus 78*, Schumann's *Fantaisie, Opus 17* and works by Debussy, Stravinsky and Roussel. Since that time, Grant Johannesen has achieved international status of the highest order. His continuing engagements with the world's great symphony orchestras and his annual recitals in the cultural capitals of many nations have consistently won for him the highest critical praise. Both the New York Philharmonic and the Cleveland Orchestra have chosen Mr. Johannesen to be their tour soloist for concerts in the Soviet Union and other international venues. His performances have repeatedly drawn high praise from the critics of the world's great newspapers, among them Harold Schonberg, who wrote, "He remains one of the finest American pianists . . . a superior musician." His recordings for Vox Cum Laude, Golden Crest and Centaur are also highly prized. A Steinway artist, Grant Johannesen appears by arrangement with ICM Artists, Ltd., New York.

During the years that he was employed by the Duke of Weimar, (1708-1717), Bach served in a number of musical capacities, one of which was performer and composer of music for the harpsichord. In addition to producing over two hundred keyboard works during those nine years, one of which is the *Prelude and Fugue* that begins this program, he took on at least two contracts for harpsichord repair. In 1717 Bach visited Dresden, where the world-famous French harpsichordist, Louis Marchand, was giving recitals. A court official persuaded Bach to challenge Marchand to a contest at the harpsichord. After initially accepting the challenge, Marchand surreptitiously left Dresden on the day before the contest was to take place, much to the satisfaction and amusement of his German hosts.

Schumann wrote *Faschingsschwank aus Wien* after a particularly pleasant visit to Vienna in 1839. In the spirit of *Fasching*, the pre-lenten revels corresponding to *mardi gras*, he included a little private joke on the Viennese in the music. Ever since the Napoleonic wars, performance of the French national anthem had been banned in Vienna, but Schumann saw to it that a careful listener would hear a hint of the *Marseillaise* in the first movement of his *Faschingsschwank*. This five-movement work, which Schumann called a "romantic sonata," stands out among his compositions in its caprice, verve and impertinence, qualities for which the Viennese were famous throughout the rest of Europe.

The pieces contained in the sets to which Debussy gave the titles *Images* and *Estampes* are prime examples of the way in which his creative output was influenced by symbolist poetry and impressionist painting. Not only are the titles of the sets borrowed from the visual arts, but each piece has a title or subtitle that calls to mind painting as much as music. The manuscript for *Hommage à Rameau*, for example, includes the subtitle, *Souvenir du Louvre*. The listener can easily imagine the composer slowly wandering the majestic halls of that great museum, experiencing ever greater inspiration as he passes from gallery to gallery.