

1806). The Gozzi libretto is also the basis of Puccini's *Turandot*, composed several years after Busoni's opera was completed. Busoni imported the tune of the English ballad *Greensleeves*, which he believed to have been of Chinese origin.

When he unveiled his formidable *Twenty-four Caprices for Solo Violin*, the legendary Italian violinist Nicolo Paganini (1782–1840) stepped into the realm of violin sorcery. His musical presence and pyrotechnics bedazzled both the violinists and the pianists of his day. Among the latter, none was more under Paganini's hypnotic power than Liszt, the reigning keyboard figure of the nineteenth century. Liszt composed an equally imposing set of etudes for the piano entitled *Six etudes d'exécution transcendente d'après Paganini*, from which the third, known as *La campanella (The Bell)*, is the most famous. These etudes were deemed unplayable by almost everyone except Liszt himself. In response to his critics, he revised them in 1851, in an edition that proved just as intimidating as the earlier version.

Busoni, also greatly admired as a pianist and a direct descendant of the Lisztian style of performance, felt the urge to enlarge the piano repertoire and at the same time pay homage to both Paganini and Liszt. Busoni revised the Liszt *Paganini Etudes* in 1911, incorporating measures that Liszt had earlier discarded and reworking them for the piano from Paganini's original score. The resulting grand fire is the work of a visionary genius who incorporated octaves, trills, repeated notes, chromatic runs, and wide leaps with his own musical intricacies and embellishments. For the audiences who first heard them, these devices were overwhelming and lent credence to the legend that Paganini's art was of devilish inspiration. In the context of contemporary performance, they recreate the magnitude of Paganini's impact on his listeners.

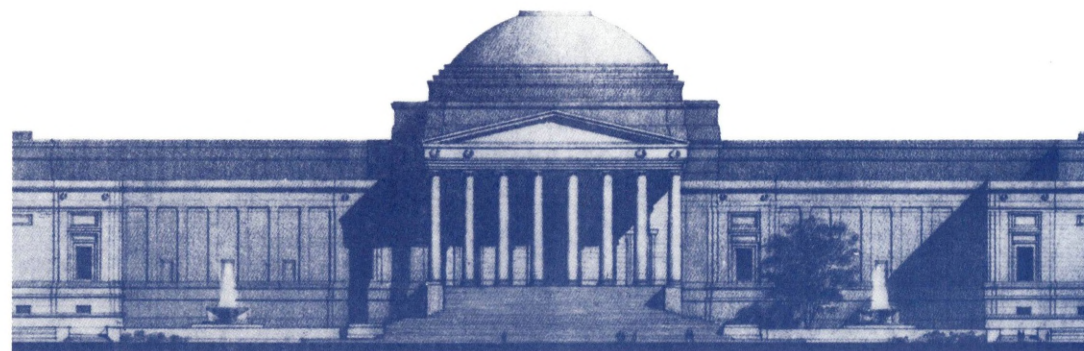
Program notes by Elmer Booze

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

The Sixty-first Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2449th Concert

GARRICK OHLSSON, *pianist*

Sunday Evening, 2 March 2003
Seven O'clock
West Building, East Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Johann Sebastian Bach/Busoni Prelude and Fugue in E-flat Major
(1685–1750) (“Saint Anne”)

Franz Liszt Sonata in B Minor
(1811–1886) (1851)

Lento assai
Recitativo
Allegro energico
(Movements played without pause)

Intermission

Ferruccio Busoni All’Italia from “Elegies”
(1866–1924) (In modo napolitano) (1907)

Sonatina No. 2
(Il tutto vivace, fantastico, con energia, capriccio e sentimento)
(1912)

Sonatina No. 6
(Sonatina super Carmen—Chamber fantasy)
(Allegro deciso) (1920)

Turandot’s Boudoir from “Elegies”
(Intermezzo) (1907)

Liszt /Busoni Paganini Etude No. 3
 (“La campanella”) (1883)

*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.*

The Musician

Since his triumph as winner of the 1970 Chopin International Piano Competition, American pianist **Garrick Ohlsson** has established himself worldwide as a musician of extraordinary interpretive power and prodigious technical facility. Although he has long been regarded as one of the world’s leading exponents of the music of Chopin, Ohlsson commands an enormous repertoire that encompasses virtually the entire piano literature. A student of the late Claudio Arrau, Ohlsson has come to be noted for his masterly performances of the works of Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert as well as the romantic repertoire. His concerto repertoire alone is unusually wide and eclectic, ranging from Haydn and Mozart to twentieth-century masters, and he has at his command approximately eighty works for piano and orchestra.

Garrick Ohlsson is an avid chamber musician and has collaborated with the Cleveland, Emerson, Takács, and Tokyo String Quartets, to name just a few. Together with violinist Jorja Fleezanis and cellist Michael Grebnier, he is a founding member of the San Francisco-based FOG Trio. A prolific recording artist, Ohlsson can be heard on the Arabesque, RCA Victor Red Seal, Angel, Bridge, BMG, Delos, Hänssler, Nonesuch, Telarc, and Virgin Classics labels. He has recorded the complete solo works of Chopin for Arabesque. In reviewing volume ten of the set (*Etudes*), the *Boston Globe* gives this account: “[Ohlsson’s] set of the *Etudes* is one of the greatest recordings of these pieces ever made. The legato *Etudes* are incomparable for their long-spanned phrasing, [and] the fast *Etudes* are just as rich in detail as the slow ones. Ohlsson surprises and captivates by his dynamic control, the emergence of inner voices, [and] the play of rubato against the strong ongoing rhythm.”

Born in White Plains, New York, Ohlsson began piano studies at the age of eight. He attended the Westchester Conservatory of Music until the age of thirteen, at which time he entered the Juilliard School of Music in New York City. While in high school, he demonstrated an extraordinary aptitude for mathematics and languages, but the concert

stage remained his true passion. His musical development has been influenced in completely different ways by a succession of distinguished pianists and teachers, most notably Claudio Arrau, Olga Barabini, Tom Lishman, Sascha Gorodnitzki, Rosina Lhévinne, and Irma Wolpe. Although he won first prizes at the Busoni Competition in Italy and the 1968 Montréal Competition, it was his triumph at the Chopin Competition in Warsaw that brought him worldwide recognition as one of the finest pianists of his generation. Since that time, he has made nearly a dozen tours of Poland where, to this day, he remains virtually a national hero. Garrick Ohlsson was awarded the Avery Fisher Prize in 1964 and received the 1988 University of Michigan Musical Society's Distinguished Artist Award. He appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with ICM Artists, Limited, of New York City.

Program Notes

Johann Sebastian Bach composed his *Prelude and Fugue in E-flat Major* ("Saint Anne") for the organ in 1729 and included it in his compendium of masterpieces for keyboard instruments, the *Klavierübung, Part III*. Busoni transcribed the prelude and fugue for the piano in 1890, the same year he married Gerda Sjöstrand, the daughter of a Swedish sculptor. The fugue theme coincidentally contains exactly the same notes as the first phrase of a hymn tune, *Saint Anne*, by William Croft (1678–1727). The tune was sung in England to Isaac Watts' text, *O God, Our Help in Ages Past*, throughout much of the eighteenth century. By the time Bach's *E-flat Fugue* was introduced in England in the nineteenth century, every listener recognized the familiar hymn in the fugue theme, and the nickname *Saint Anne* has been attached to it in the English-speaking world ever since.

Liszt dedicated his *Sonata in B Minor* to Robert Schumann in return for Schumann's dedication to Liszt of his well-known *C Major Fantasy*. The sonata contained so many daring innovations that many who attended the first performance could not endure it to the end. The work has been characterized by some critics as technically self-defeating and sophisticated to the point of vagueness, but it is nevertheless

acknowledged by pianists as a monumental work of prophetic cleverness and intellect. The visionary coda, with its bells tolling in the distance, brings the sonata to a mystical close that calls to mind Liszt's lifelong vacillation between the secular and spiritual emotional worlds.

Busoni originally composed six *Elegies* for the piano in 1907, but added a seventh, entitled *Berceuse (Élégiaque)*, on the occasion of the death of his mother. As the second work in this collection, *All'Italia* mimics a Neapolitan song and incorporates several themes that Busoni had used in his *Piano Concerto, Op. 39*, written between 1903 and 1904. Each of the *Elegies* is dedicated to one of Busoni's disciples. *All'Italia* is dedicated to Egon Petri (1881–1962), a celebrated German pianist and teacher of Dutch descent.

Busoni also wrote a set of six *Sonatinas*, which he completed between 1910 and 1920. These years encapsulated his accelerated musical growth, going from late nineteenth-century romanticism to expressionism and neoclassicism and finally to the matter-of-fact approach of the later twentieth century. *Sonatina No. 2* boasts Busoni's advanced harmonic development and exploits the economical sonatina form. The piece is the most forward-looking of the set. "The music's seeming unpredictability is, on closer scrutiny, entirely logical. Its mood inhabits the shadowy dream world between sleep and awakening—a fantastic landscape, suggested perhaps by E.T.A. Hoffmann" (Paul Jacobs, 1930–1983). *Sonatina No. 6*, subtitled *Super Carmen* or *Carmen Fantasy*, was a favorite of the noted Polish-American pianist, pedagogue, and composer Edward Steuermann (1892–1964), a pupil of Busoni. Steuermann said of the work: "The *Carmen Fantasy* does not pretend to be a brilliant 'concert-paraphrase.' [It] is a rather introspective work; the well-known melodies, sometimes changed in character or tempo, are presented in a reflective mood. Here the *Concert-Fantasy*, once designed to arouse the cheers of the concert crowd, changes into the loving, serious meditations of an almost lonely artist."

The fourth of Busoni's *Seven Elegies* is entitled *Turandot's Frauengemach (Turandot's Boudoir)*. Busoni wrote a short opera entitled *Turandot*, basing his own libretto on that of Carlo Gozzi (1720–