

- 11 The Aulos Ensemble**
Presented in honor of the exhibition *Jean-Antoine Houdon (1741–1828): Sculptor of the Enlightenment*
Rameau: Suites from *Les fêtes d'Hébé* and *Les Indes galantes*
Works by Jacques Duphy and Jean-Jacques Rousseau
- 18 Livia Sohn, violinist**
J. S. Bach: *Sonata, BWV 1016*
Grieg: *Sonata No. 3*
Works by Jonathan Berger and Jenő Hubay
- 25 Klaus Hellwig, pianist**
Beethoven: *Sonata, Op. 14/2*
Schumann: *Davidsbüdlertänze, Op. 6*
- June**
- 1 National Gallery Orchestra**
George Manos, conductor
Mendelssohn: *Symphony No. 3*
Ravel: *Le tombeau de Couperin*
Ravel: *Bolero*
- 8 Ilya Gringolts, violinist**
Partitas and sonatas for unaccompanied violin by J. S. Bach
- 15 National Gallery Chamber Players String Quartet**
Griffes: *Indian Sketches*
Janáček: *Quartet No. 1*
Beethoven: *Quartet, Op. 130*

Concerts continue until 29 June.

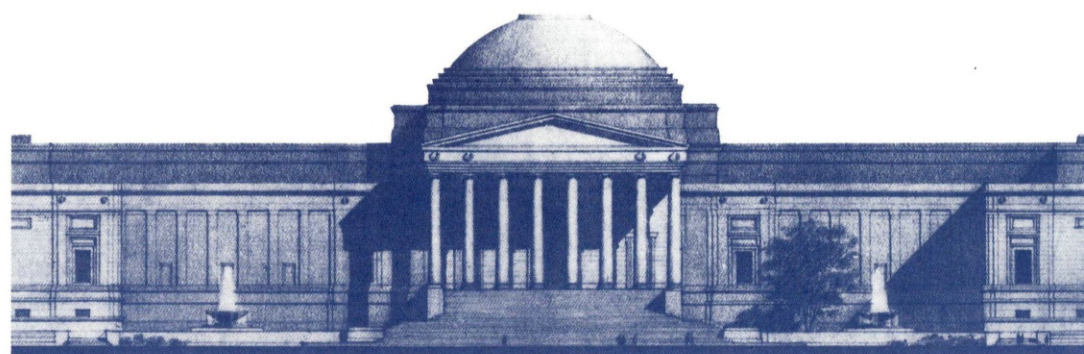
The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

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



2454th Concert

LOUIS LORTIE, pianist

Presented in honor of the exhibition
Frederic Remington: The Color of Night

Sunday Evening, 6 April 2003
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Robert Schumann
(1810–1856)

Frühlingsnacht
from “Liederkreis,” Op. 39, S. 568
Arranged for piano solo by Franz Liszt (1872)

Richard Wagner
(1813–1883)

O du mein holder Abendstern
from “Tannhäuser”
Arranged for piano solo by Franz Liszt

Schumann

Drei Phantasiestücke
Op. 111 (1851)

Molto vivace et appassionatamente
Piu tosto lento; un poco piu mosso
Con forza, assai marcato

Franz Liszt
(1811–1886)

Transcendental Etude No. 5, S. 139
“Feux-follets” (1851)

Transcendental Etude No. 11, S. 139
“Harmonies du soir” (1851)

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 9, S. 244
“Carnaval de Pest” (1848)

Intermission

Elliot Carter
(b. 1908)

Night Fantasies
(1980)

Maurice Ravel
(1875–1937)

Ondine
Le gibet
Scarbo

Gaspard de la nuit
(1908)

The Musician

In a 1997 review in *The Daily Telegraph* (London), music critic Philip Hensher hailed **Louis Lortie** as “one of perhaps a dozen pianists who it is worth dropping everything to go and hear. For sheer intelligence, subtlety, and technical command he has few peers. For the unique demands of bravura, delicate coloring, and seriousness which the music of Chopin places on the pianist, I think he now has none....It is impossible to come up with anything but praise for musicianship so prodigious and intelligence so unbounded.” Such a panegyric response to this Canadian pianist is by no means rare. He has been praised for the fresh perspective and individuality he brings to a deliberately broad spectrum of the keyboard literature. Lortie studied with Yvonne Hubert, a pupil of the great French pianist, Alfred Cortot (1877–1962); with the Beethoven specialist Dieter Weber; and subsequently with Leon Fleisher. In addition, he was deeply influenced by the distinguished violinist and chamber musician Josef Gingold (1909–1995).

Born in 1959 in Montreal, Louis Lortie gave his first public performance at the age of thirteen with the Montreal Symphony. Three years later, he made his debut with the Toronto Symphony and toured the People’s Republic of China and Japan as soloist with that orchestra. In 1984 he won first prize at the Busoni Competition and was a prizewinner at the Leeds Competition in England. Lortie has made more than twenty-five recordings on the Chandos label. Among them is a complete set of the Chopin *Etudes*, *Op. 10* and *Op. 25*, that has been cited in the *BBC Magazine’s* special piano issue as one of the “fifty best recordings by superlative pianists.” His recording of Beethoven’s *Eroica Variations*

won the Edison Award, and his disc of Schumann's *Bunte Blätter* and other works by Schumann and Brahms was named one of the best CDs of the year by *BBC Music Magazine*. In addition to having recorded Ravel's complete works for piano, Lortie's releases include the complete works for piano and orchestra of Liszt. Following the success in 1998 of his Chopin *Préludes* CD, he will soon release a CD of Chopin *Ballades* and *Impromptus*. Louis Lortie appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Cramer/Marder Artists of Lafayette, California.

Program Notes

Fascination with night and darkness is found in the literature of the Western world from the time of ancient Greece, but it was in the nineteenth century that the night in all its aspects became a popular subject for both visual artists and composers. The first composer to make use of the term nocturne and establish it as a genre was John Field, who bestowed the title on eighteen of his piano pieces. His approach to piano texture captured the attention of Chopin, whose nocturnes, with their wide range of moods, placed the genre on a higher plane. The most famous painter to make frequent use of the term as a title was James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), for whom the use of a musical term suited his commitment to art as pure abstract form. Frederic Remington's nocturnes, like Whistler's, exploit the tension between the almost palpable beauty of darkness and moonlight, but they also evoke the imminence of danger, death, and psychological disturbance. Unlike Whistler, Remington acknowledged the presence of narrative suspense in his night pieces, and in this he had much in common with Chopin.

Franz Liszt, a master of the art of transcribing music from one medium to another, was nowhere more successful in this endeavor than in his astonishing transcriptions of songs and opera arias. These gratifying pianistic gems demonstrate Liszt's uncanny ability to retain every subtlety inherent in the original vocal score. Two examples begin this program of music of the night: Schumann's *Frühlingsnacht* (*Spring Night*) from *Liederkreis*, *Op. 39* (S. 568) and Wagner's *O du mein holder Abendstern* (*O Gracious Evening Star*) from *Tannhäuser* (S. 444).

Schumann wrote his *Drei Phantasiestücke* (*Three Fantasy Pieces*), *Op. 111*, during his stay in Düsseldorf, a prolific period during which he also composed his *Symphony No. 3*, *Op. 97* (*Rhenish*), *Märchenbilder*, *Op. 113*, for viola and piano, and the *Cello Concerto*, *Op. 112*. The *Fantasy Pieces* contain, as the late renowned pianist Claudio Arrau (1903–1991) stated, "something of the earlier intensity about [them]," suggesting the depth and ardency found in three of Schumann's earlier piano works, the *Jugend-Album*, *Op. 68*, *Four Marches*, *Op. 76*, and *Waldszenen*, *Op. 82*. Further, Arrau maintains that Schumann had perhaps experienced a feeling of déjà vu concerning earlier works of the same genre, [*Acht*] *Phantasiestücke*, *Op. 12*, written in 1837. Composed some fourteen years later, *Op. 111* has within its three independent movements an outward appearance of a free fantasy in an ABA format. To cite Arrau, "Indeed, the contrast between the unrest of the first [movement], the Schubertian calm of the second, and the vigor of the third makes *Op. 111* a most satisfying whole."

Liszt's *Etudes d'exécution transcendante* (*Transcendental Studies*) reached its final version in 1852 in the form of a set of twelve studies. In 1827, at the age of sixteen, Liszt had projected a prototype consisting of twenty-four etudes. In 1836 he created a second version and dedicated it to Carl Czerny. To quote the legendary French pianist of Hungarian birth, György Cziffra (1921–1994), "[This collection is] the summation of the artist's meditations on his art, with particular attention to matters of technique, an initiation to the very nature of that art, and perhaps even a philosophy." The two studies on tonight's recital are among the more delectable and less aggressive of the set. *Feux-follets* is light and airy, with the overtones of elves at play in a Mendelssohnian musical fairy tale. *Harmonies du soir*, on the other hand, elicits the aural felicity of a bejeweled nocturne in the form of a grand, luxurious etude, the tone colors and sonorities of which are a harbinger of music of Debussy and Richard Strauss.

From the beginning of his "virtuoso period" in 1839 to the end of his life, the gypsy music of his native Hungary held a great deal of fascination for Liszt. He had left the land of his birth in childhood, returning some twenty years later (1840) to great acclaim. The ninth

Hungarian Rhapsody (Carnaval de Pest) is among the nineteen he wrote for solo piano, in which he aspired to immortalize the music of the Hungarian gypsies. As its subtitle implies, the rhapsody is a vociferous essay on conviviality.

In Elliott Carter's own words: "*Night Fantasies* is a piano piece of continuously changing moods, suggesting the fleeting thoughts and feelings that pass through the mind during a period of wakefulness at night. The quiet, nocturnal evocation with which it begins and [which] returns occasionally, is suddenly broken by a flighty series of short phrases that emerge and disappear. Many others of contrasting character follow this episode, sometimes break[ing] in abruptly and at other times develop[ing] smoothly out of what has gone before. The work culminates in a loud, obsessive, periodic repetition of an emphatic chord that, as it dies away, brings the work to its conclusion.

In this score, I wanted to capture the fanciful, changeable quality of our inner life at a time when it is not dominated by strong directive intentions or desires. [I wanted] to capture the poetic moodiness that, in an earlier romantic context, I enjoy in [the] works of Robert Schumann, [such as his] *Kreisleriana*, *Op. 16*, *Carnaval*, *Op. 9*, and *Dauids-bündlertänze*, *Op. 6*."

Gaspard de la nuit was written in 1908 and derived its title from the eponymous collection by Aloysius Louis Bertrand (1807-1841), an exponent of chimerical poetry who was held in awe by Baudelaire and Mallarmé. Bertrand attributed the poems in the collection to the devil, alias Gaspard. Ravel's desire was to "write a piano piece that is even harder to play than Mily Balakirev's oriental fantasy, *Islamey*." Each of the three pieces teems with Herculean requirements: double notes that are effervescent and unrelenting (*Ondine*); repeated bell-like notes, requiring extraordinary control (*Le gibet*); and forward surging runs, creating an inexorable charge (*Scarbo*). Ravel creates in music the satanic elements inherent in all three poems: *Ondine*, a water nymph with her contemptuous laughter; *Le gibet*, a bell tolling at sunset as a corpse hangs from the gallows (Ravel's paraphrase); and *Scarbo*, a goblin appearing as a frightening apparition. One French writer observed: "[The pieces] are not

atmospheric portraits in the style of Liszt or Schumann, but psychological case studies, observed and recorded with the incorruptibility of an analyst."

Program notes by Elmer Booze

Concerts at the National Gallery of Art

Under the direction of George Manos

Concerts in April, May, and June 2003

April

13 **Valerie Tryon, pianist**
Presented in honor of
the exhibition *Frederic
Remington: The Color
of Night*
Chopin: *Two Nocturnes*
Liszt: *Harmonies du soir*
Granados: *The Lover and the
Nightingale*
Poulenc: *Three Nocturnes*

20 **No concert**

27 **Zuill Bailey, cellist
j. y. song, pianist**
Mendelssohn: *Variations
concertantes*
Beethoven: *Cello Sonata No. 4*
Crumb: *Sonata for Solo Cello*
Prokofiev: *Sonata, Op. 119*

May

4 **Julius Berger and
Hyun-Jung Berger, cellists**
Presented in honor of the
exhibition *Jean-Antoine
Houdon (1741-1828:
Sculptor of the
Enlightenment*
Barrière: *Sonata in G Major*
Mozart: *O Isis and Osiris*
Haydn: *Duet in G Major*
Boccherini: *Adagio and Allegro*