

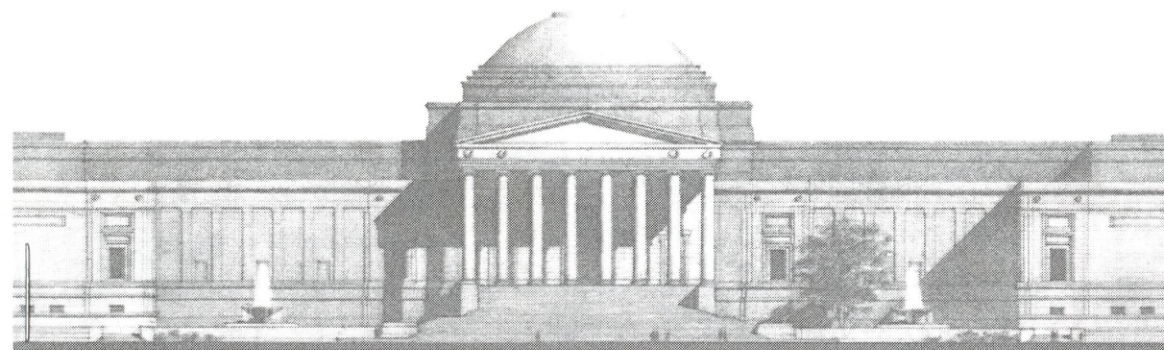
For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

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.

Please note that late entry or reentry of
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

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The Sixty-ninth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,820th Concert

Victor Goldberg, pianist

January 30, 2011
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)
Scherzo no. 2 in B-flat Minor, op. 31 (1837)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)
Sonata no. 9 in D Major, K. 311 (1777)
Allegro con spirito
Andante con espressione
Rondeau; Allegro

Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915)
Sonata no. 5 in F-sharp Major, op. 53 (1907)

INTERMISSION

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)
Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, op. 24 (1861)

The Musician

Hailed by music critics for his imaginative and original interpretations, Russian-born Israeli pianist Victor Goldberg continues to fascinate a wide range of audiences around the world. A prize winner in the 2008 Pro Musicis International Award, the Artist Recognition Award at the International Keyboard Festival in New York, the Vladimir Horowitz International Piano Competition, and the Arianne Katcz Piano Competition, Goldberg has performed extensively in the United States, Europe, and Asia. His recent North American appearances include Alice Tully Hall, the Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada, Bargemusic, Carnegie Hall, the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts in Chicago, Lincoln Center, and the ProMusicis International Concert Series in Boston, as well as numerous recital and concerto appearances in Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. In addition to a recital sponsored by the Washington Performing Arts Society at the Smithsonian Institution, Goldberg has performed at major international festivals, including the Aspen Music Festival, Chiang Mai Music Festival in Thailand, the Festival de La Ribagorza in Spain, the International Keyboard Festival in New York, the International Piano Festivals in the Canary Islands, Pianofest in the Hamptons, and the Sarasota Music Festival in Florida.

As part of his 2010 debut tour in China and Southeast Asia, Goldberg performed recitals in Tianjin Concert Hall and Wuhan Qintai Concert Hall in China; Philamlife Auditorium in Manila, Philippines; the Embassy of Israel in Yangon, Myanmar; and the Goethe Institut Auditorium in Bangkok, Thailand. Other international performances include the Congress Hall in Kiev, Ukraine; Spiegelsaal Schloss in Rheinsberg, Germany; Tel Aviv Museum of Art and Jerusalem Music Center in Israel; and Tenerife Auditorium in the Canary Islands, as well as solo recitals in Austria and Spain.

Deeply attached to his Jewish heritage, Goldberg also performs a number of benefit concerts. He is an official representative of the Speakers Bureau of the Jewish National Fund. For his achievement in music, Goldberg received the World Congress of Russian Jewry's Artistic Mastery Award.

Goldberg studied under Constance Keene, Jerome Lowenthal, Mark Shaviner, Alexander Shtarkman, and Alexander Volkov, at the Juilliard School, the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, Tel Aviv University, and at the Manhattan School of Music, where he was the first instrumentalist in the school's history to be awarded the prestigious Artist Diploma in Performance. He is a recipient of full scholarships from all of the aforementioned music institutions, as well as America-Israel Cultural Foundation awards.

Program Notes

Mozart's Piano *Sonata in D Major*, K. 311, was composed in Mannheim in November 1777, while he and his mother were on a lengthy trip that would take them to Paris the following spring. Aspects of the mannered Mannheim style are evident in this sonata, particularly in its sharp dynamic contrasts. The young composer's powers of expression were growing, as he assimilated not only characteristics of works by Mannheim composers, but many of the ideas of Haydn, especially in respect to his use of sonata form. Mozart also incorporated an orchestral style in his writing for the keyboard.

Set in three movements, the sonata begins with an *Allegro* distinguished by a flourish and a cheerful melody. After a modulation to the dominant, there is a secondary theme that resembles a keyboard solo with its scalar melody. The calm *Andante* is a classical rondo featuring an elegant opening theme fit for a vocal composition followed by sudden and wide dynamic contrasts. The closing *Rondeau* is filled with youthful energy and surprises. The most technically challenging of the three movements, the *Rondeau* includes a cadenza passage that leads, in the manner of a concerto, to the return of the rondo theme and the close of the movement.

Alexander Scriabin's *Piano Sonata no. 5* marks a turning point in his compositional style from romantic to atonal. By making no attempt to have a tonal center and containing the entire sonata in one long movement, Scriabin reveals his own individual voice and breaks away from traditional tonality and multi-movement sonatas. The sonata is notoriously one of the most difficult pieces in the piano repertory, but is also the most frequently performed and recorded of the composer's works. Scriabin included an epigraph to this sonata, taken from his long work *The Poem of Ecstasy*—not to be confused with his *Symphony no. 4* (*Poem of Ecstasy*), op. 54. The epigraph reads, "I summon you to life, hidden longings! You, drowned in the dark depths of the creative spirit, you fearful embryos of life, I bring you daring!" The piece consists of five themes that intertwine and evolve throughout the piece: the intense, dissonant trill and glissando in the opening; a slow, languishing introductory theme; a dance-like *presto* based

on material from the introductory theme and serving as the first subject group; a transition marked *imperioso*; and a *meno vivo* that serves as the second subject group.

Brahms' works for piano broadened his career as a composer. In his earliest sets of variations, especially those of op. 9, the melody is of primary importance, and he clings to it while freely changing the harmony. His later studies of Beethoven, however, led to increased transformation of themes, as he adhered to their basic phrase structure and harmonic pattern. Like Bach in his "Goldberg" *Variations* and Beethoven in the "Diabelli" *Variations*, in the *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel*, op. 24, Brahms constructs a sprawling masterwork based on a very simple idea.

Brahms may have been attracted by the utter simplicity of Handel's theme and the challenge it posed. The melody is the *Air* from the *First Suite in B-flat Major* of Handel's *Suites de pièces de clavecin* of 1733. (Handel himself wrote a set of variations on this same *Air*.) Brahms certainly recognized the harmonic potential suggested by the theme's sequential structure, reharmonizing recurrent notes. At several points, he pairs the variations so that the second of a pair "varies" the material of the first. British musicologist and composer Donald Francis Tovey (1875–1940) recognized a larger grouping in variations fourteen through eighteen, which he described as "aris[ing] one out of the other in a wonderful decrescendo of tone and crescendo of Romantic beauty." In the course of the twenty-five variations, Brahms revisits some older traditions—a strict canon forms the basis of variation 6; variations 5, 6, and 13 constitute the traditional ventures into the tonic minor; and variation 19 is a fast version of an ancient dance, the *siciliana*. Innovations that are new with Brahms include a Hungarian rhapsody (no. 13), the "music box" variation (no. 22), and a chromatic fantasia (no. 20). The closing fugue, with a subject derived from the original *Air*, is a study in the free use of baroque counterpoint.

Program notes by Danielle DeSwert Hahn

Upcoming concerts at the National Gallery of Art

National Gallery of Art Vocal Ensemble

Gregorian chant and
music by Italian composers

February 2, 2011

Wednesday, 12:10 pm

West Building, West Garden Court