

The motivic germ running through the sonata is the two-note phrase C-flat, B-flat. There is frequent use of twelve-tone rows, especially in the double row accompaniment in the *Adagio*, but only as a device, not as a system. The sonata closes with a monumental fugue in four voices, the subject of which has a syncopated rhythm. In the estimation of many pianists, no fugue for piano has been its equal since Brahms' *Handel-Variations*.

Francis Poulenc, on hearing Horowitz play the sonata at Barber's country home in 1950, wrote: "It (the sonata) pleases me without reserve. It is a remarkable work from both the musical and instrumental point of view. In turn tragic, joyous, and songful, it ends up with a fugue [that is fantastically difficult to play]. This is a long way from the sad and scholastic fugues of the Hindemith pupils (the pupils, I say). Bursting with energy, this finale knocks you out (*vous met 'knock-out'*) in five minutes."

Program notes on Haydn and Schubert by Ileen Zovluck
© 1997 and 2000 Columbia Artists Management, Inc.

Used by permission

Program notes on Richard Cumming © 1997 Columbia Artists
Management, Inc. Used by permission

Program notes on Barber by John Browning
© 2000 Columbia Artists Management, Inc.

Used by permission

Program notes adapted and edited by Elmer Booze

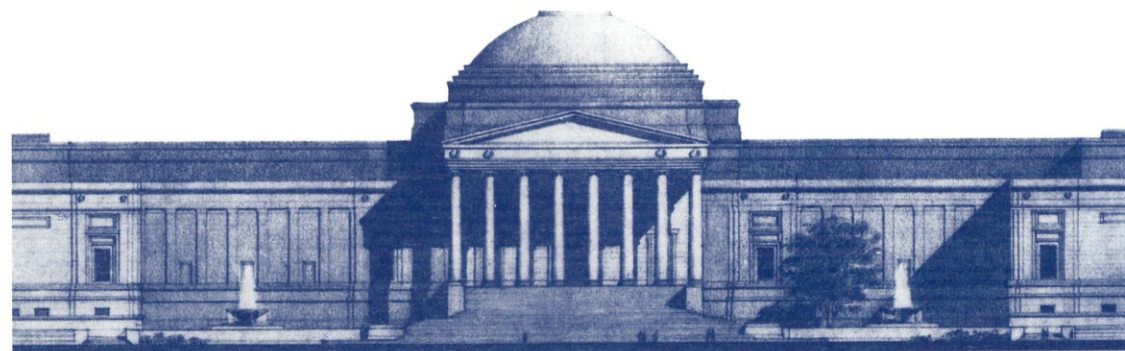
*For the convenience of concertgoers,
the Garden Café remains open until 6:30 p.m.*

*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 Sixtieth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2418th Concert

JOHN BROWNING, *pianist*

Sunday Evening, 21 April 2002
Seven O'clock
West Building, East Garden Court

Admission free

PROGRAM

Joseph Haydn
(1732–1809)

Sonata No. 33 in D Major
Hob. XVI: 37 (1780)

Allegro con brio
Largo e sostenuto
Finale: Presto, ma non troppo

Franz Schubert
(1797–1828)

Sonata in A Major
D. 959 (1828)

Allegro
Andantino
Scherzo: Allegro vivace; Trio: Un poco più lento
Rondo: Allegretto

INTERMISSION

Richard Cumming
(b. 1928)

Silhouettes
(1993)

Samuel Barber
(1910–1981)

Sonata in E-flat Minor
Op. 26 (1949)

Allegro energico
Allegro vivace e leggiero
Adagio mesto
Fuga: Allegro con spirito

The finale (*Rondo: Allegretto*) may be compared to the rondo in the *Sonata No. 1 in G Major, Op. 31*, of Beethoven. In both movements the theme is repeated in the tenor voice with an accompaniment of flowing triplets. Another similarity to the Beethoven sonata is the central episode, a development in which the theme returns in a broken version. The work ends with a lively coda.

A short note explaining how Richard Cumming came to compose *Silhouettes* for solo piano was made available in 1993 to John Browning on the occasion of his performance of the world premiere at Lincoln Center: “I find myself...having to supply program notes some five weeks prior to the first performance for a work in which two sections are still unassembled sketches. (Was it Ravel who said of his *Sonata for Violin and Piano* that the piece was finished except for writing it down?) OK, so whence the title?

Two weeks ago, I showed Mr. Browning what had been finished. Fortunately, he did not seem displeased with what he heard and asked me what I called them. I hadn't a clue. Since they are little examinations and remembrances of our musical past, I had thought of something like *Souvenirs* (‘Sam Barber already used that title’), or *Excursions* (‘Ditto’), or *Memories* (‘I do think there’s a song...’), or *Epitaphs* (‘Theodore Chanler’s song cycle’), or *Apparitions* (‘a ballet’), or *Obituaries* (‘Leave that to the critics’), or *Tombstones* (‘...I’). (Dead pause.) ‘What about *Silhouettes*?’ my wise and wonderful friend said. *SILHOUETTES!* Perfect!

So here they are: *Silhouettes*, a set of pianistic flickers of times gone by...in celebration of John Browning’s sixtieth [birthday], as well as my small contribution to thirty-nine years of treasured friendship.”

Sonata, Op. 26, by Samuel Barber was commissioned in 1947 by Irving Berlin and Richard Rodgers to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the League of Composers. Vladimir Horowitz played its first performance in Havana, Cuba, on 9 December 1949, as well as its subsequent performances in Washington, DC, and New York. It rapidly became the most widely performed and admired piano sonata by an American composer and remains so today.