

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

FOURTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215/842-6353

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50TH ANNUAL AMERICAN MUSIC FESTIVAL

FEATURES WORLD PREMIERE AND CHARLIE BYRD TRIO

APRIL 18 THROUGH MAY 9, 1993

Washington, D.C. -- The American Music Festival under the artistic direction of George Manos begins its landmark fiftieth anniversary season on April 18 with the world premiere of National Gallery Suite No. 5, composed by the Gallery Orchestra's first conductor, Richard Bales. The series of four Sunday evening concerts concludes on May 9, when master jazz guitarist Charlie Byrd will appear with bassist Joe Byrd and drummer Chuck Redd of the internationally renowned Charlie Byrd Trio.

The opening program will also include Sebastian, a suite for orchestra by Gian Carlo Menotti, and Lamia, a symphonic poem by Edward MacDowell. On April 25, soprano Phyllis Bryn-Julson will appear with pianist Donald Sutherland in a recital of songs by Charles Ives, H. Stevens Brewster, Ronald Perera, and Lee Hoiby. On May 2, the Lark Quartet will present string quartets by Peter Schickele, Ellsworth Milburn, and Aaron Jay Kernis.

Founded in 1944 by Richard Bales, the American Music Festival is the longest running festival dedicated to the music of American composers. More than 300 world premieres have been performed over the past half century. Some of these works have

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continued to attract attention, such as Charles Ives' Symphony No. 1 and Daniel Pinkham's Symphony No. 4.

In addition to showcasing new music by American composers, the festival has also provided a second hearing for worthy works that have not developed a mass audience. Among those rescued at recent festivals are Henry Cowell's Symphony No. 11, written in 1953 and played for the first time in 1989 by the National Gallery Orchestra; Four Piano Blues by Aaron Copland, revived in 1991 by pianist James Tocco; and Four Songs of the Seasons by Donald Waxman, given its second performance by the National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble at the 1989 American Festival. John LaMontaine's Piano Sonata, Opus 3 was brought to public notice after forty-seven years of obscurity when pianist Ramon Salvatore presented its Washington premiere in 1989.

The American Music Festival began at the National Gallery of Art in 1944 with a recital by violinist Kay Rickert and pianist Helen McGraw. The first series of five concerts also featured the Army Music School Ensembles in a program of works composed entirely by Americans serving at that time in the nation's armed forces. The National Gallery Orchestra, then known as the National Gallery Sinfonietta, played a concert of works by Burrill Phillips, William Schuman, Mary Howe, and Richard Bales, the orchestra's new conductor.

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Concerts at the National Gallery are at 7:00 p.m. on Sundays in the West Garden Court of the West Building. Concertgoers are admitted free of charge on a first-come, first-served basis, beginning at 6:00 p.m. Those arriving after 6:00 p.m. may enter only at the 6th Street and Constitution Avenue entrance to the West Building. Concerts are broadcast on a one-month delayed basis every Sunday at 7:00 p.m. on radio station WGTS 91.9-FM. For further information, call 202/842-6941.

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THE 50TH AMERICAN MUSIC FESTIVAL

April 18 through May 9, 1994

PROGRAMS

April 18

National Gallery Orchestra
George Manos, Conductor

Richard Bales: National
Gallery Suite No. 5
(World premiere)
Menotti: Sebastian Suite
MacDowell: Lamia

April 25

Phyllis Bryn-Julson, soprano
Donald Sutherland, pianist
Rudolph Vrbsky, oboist

Songs by Charles Ives,
H. Stevens Brewster,
Ronald Perera,
Gunther Schulle, and Lee Hoiby

May 2

The Lark Quartet
Eva Gruesser, violin
Robin Mayforth, violin
Anna Kruger, viola
Astrid Schween, cello

Milburn: String Quartet No. 2
Schickele: String Quartet No. 2
Aaron Jay Kernis: String Quartet

May 9

The Charlie Byrd Trio

Jazz Concert

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