THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art

1580th Concert

NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA
RICHARD BALES, CONDUCTOR

Sunday Evening, April 6, 1980 at Seven
West Building, East Garden Court
Johannes Brahms .......... Symphony No. 4 in E Minor, Opus 98 (1833-97)

Allegro non troppo
Andante moderato
Allegro giocoso
Allegro energico e passionato

INTERMISSION

Jackson Hill .......................................................... Sangraal (1977)
(b. 1941)

First Washington Performance

Richard Wagner ......................... Good Friday Spell from “Parsifal”
(1813-83) (1882)

Richard Wagner ................. Overture to “Tannhäuser” (1845)

Sangraal, which takes its title from a Celtic term for the Holy Grail, is a short symphonic poem that alludes to the mythic quest for the eternal and holy. The widespread reference in medieval literature to a sacred vessel, at once mysterious and magical, has been echoed in modern times by C. F. Jung, who held that the grail legend was a manifestation of even older myths surrounding vessels of stone, the alchemical *lapis*, and the soul-stone—the seat of human spirituality.

*Sangraal* was written while the composer was reading Mallory, Jung, and *The Secret of the Sangraal* by Arthur Machen, and under the spell of visits to Glastonbury and Tintagel. There are several programmatic elements in the work. The persistent drone on the note D is a device borrowed from Hindu music and may be seen to symbolize the quest. The D serves as a “leading tone” to an increasingly apparent E-flat chord, which anticipates a double chant in that key—a reference to the grail vision.

*Sangraal* was commissioned by the Cape Cod Symphony Orchestra.

Jackson Hill, born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1941, was a Morehead Scholar at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where he received the Ph.D. in musicology in 1970. A composer from age 14, with more than eighty works to his credit, he is also a performer as a violinist, pianist, and conductor, and in 1975, as a countertenor, he served as a choral vicar at Exeter College, Oxford. In 1977 he spent two months in Japan studying Buddhist music as part of a long-term project on music and mysticism in Eastern and Western cultures. He is associate professor of Music at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

Music for *Sangraal* is a loan from the Edwin A. Fleisher Collection of Orchestral Music of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

_This concert is broadcast by Station WGMS 570 AM and 103.5 FM._