NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART CONCERTS

November and December 1989

November
12 National Gallery Orchestra
   George Manos, Conductor
   Works by Debussy, Creston, Chabrier and Prokofiev
19 Canadian Piano Trio
   Works by Mozart, Brahms and Smetana
26 Agi Rado, piano
   Works by Beethoven, Chopin and Kodaly

December
3 Donald Collup, baritone
   Kenneth Merrill, piano, with Chamber Ensemble
   Works by Gabriel Fauré
10 National Gallery Orchestra
   George Manos, Conductor
   Works by Mahler and Brahms
17 The Maryland Camerata
   Samuel Gordon, Director
   Christmas Concert with audience caroling
24 No concert; Gallery closed
31 No concert; Gallery closed

Concerts at the National Gallery are open to the public, free of charge.

The use of cameras or recording devices during the performance is not allowed.

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art

1946th Concert

NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA
GEORGE MANOS, Conductor

Sunday Evening, November 12, 1989
at Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court
PROGRAM

Emmanuel Chabrier ................................................. Joyeuse Marche
(1841-1894) (1888)

Claude Debussy ................................................... Two Nocturnes
(1876-1971) (1897)

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Paul Creston ..................................................... Two Choric Dances, Opus 17
(1906-1985) (1938)

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INTERMISSION
(Twelve minutes)

Sergey Prokofiev .......................... Suite from The Love for Three Oranges
(1891-1953) (1917)

Les ridicules (Ridiculous Fellows)
Le magicien Tchelio et Fata Morgana jouent aux cartes
(The Magician Tchelio and Fata Morgana Play Cards)
Marche
Scherzo
Le prince et la princesse
La fuite (Flight)

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These concerts are broadcast live on Radio Station
WGMS, 570 AM and 103.5 FM.

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The U.S. Recording Companies furnish funds in part for the instrumental music for
this performance through the Music Performance Trust Funds, as arranged by Local
161-710, American Federation of Musicians.

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Emmanuel Chabrier was locked by the rigid paternalistic society of his
time into a career path chosen by his father. In spite of the fact that
Emmanuel was a child prodigy at the piano and composed and performed in
public to an extent well beyond his years, his father persisted in sending him
to the Lycée St. Louis in Paris and later to law school. In honor of his father’s
intention, Emmanuel took a position upon graduation in the French Ministry
of the Interior, all the while composing and studying music in his spare
time. Eventually Chabrier’s success as a composer induced him to resign his
government post, but this did not occur until 1880, after he had spent nineteen
years “behind a desk”. His interests ranged widely to include poetry
and painting as well as music, and he counted among his friends Verlaine and
Manet, who painted his portrait twice.

Another composer who was profoundly influenced by the poetry of
Verlaine and impressionism in painting was Claude Debussy. Camille
Mauclair wrote that the paintings Monet and Degas are symphonies and
suites of light, while the music of Debussy is sonorous impressionistic painting.
Debussy himself described Nuages as “the unchanging aspect of the sky,
with the slow and melancholy passage of clouds dissolving into a vague
grayness tinged with white.” Melodic motives which are slow and melancholy
in Nuages are transformed in Fêtes to become vivacious bursts of light
and rhythm. Of this nocturne, Debussy wrote: “It reflects the movement,
the restless dancing rhythms of the atmosphere, interspersed with brusque
bursts of light. There is also the episode of a procession – a dazzling and
wholly visionary pagent – passing through the festival and blended with it.”

Paul Creston was the son of Italian immigrant parents, raised in New York
City. Trained as an organist and choirmaster, he did not decide on composi-
tion as a profession until he was twenty-six. Once his work became known,
his rise was meteoric, with a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1938, followed
quickly by the New York Music Critics’ Circle Award in 1941 and subsequent
awards and commissions. He was the Director of the American Society of
Composers and Publishers from 1960-1968. The two choric dances were
written in 1938, with the original version conceived for chamber orchestra.
The music is intended to suggest abstractly the movements of dancers (hence
the word “choric” in the title), rather than to provide accompaniment for
dance.

Sergey Prokofiev’s wry sense of humour was in high gear when he wrote
his parody opera, The Love for Three Oranges. The opera is based on a fairy
tale which finds three princesses confined by a magic spell within three
oranges. Under a spell from the same evil sorceress, a prince becomes
obsessed with love for all three oranges. He is compelled to transport them
through a desert to the edge of the sea, the only place where they can be
opened without killing the princesses within. The prince’s page crazed with
thirst as he follows his master across the desert, opens two of the oranges, at
which point two of the princesses die. Eventually the prince, too, succumbs
to temptation and opens the third orange. He falls madly in love with the
princess thus released, and tries desperately to save her from certain death.
Paradoxically, the spell is broken not by his love but by the intervention of
characters who have been looking on passively from either side of the stage
throughout the opera.