NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART CONCERTS

January and February, 1990

January

14 National Gallery Orchestra
   George Manos, Conductor
   Works by Mozart, Borodin and Ravel

21 Coleman Blumfield, piano
   Works by Schubert, Mussorgsky and Babin

28 The Charleston String Quartet
   Works by Mozart, Castaldo and Schumann

February

4 National Gallery Orchestra
   George Manos, Conductor
   Concert in honor of Richard Bales’ 75th birthday
   Works by Bales, Franck and Debussy

11 Ben Holt, baritone
   John Keene, piano
   Works by Spohr, Ravel, Nathaniel Dett and Hall Johnson

18 Dmitry Feofanov, piano
   Works by Sergey Prokofiev

25 National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble
   Works by Hindemith, Debussy and Ravel

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

1954th Concert

COLEMAN BLUMFIELD, pianist

Sunday Evening, January 21, 1990
at Seven O’clock
West Building, East Garden Court
PROGRAM

In memoriam Vladimir Horowitz

Domenico Scarlatti ........................................... Three Sonatas
(1685-1757)
Sonata in E Major, L. 23
Sonata in E-flat Major, L. 203
Sonata in E Major, L. 164

Franz Schubert ............ Impromptu in G-flat Major, Opus 90, No. 3
(1797-1828) (1827)

Modest Mussorgsky ............ Pictures at an Exhibition
(1839-1881) (1874)
Promenade
The Gnome
Promenade
The Old Castle
Promenade
Tuileries
(Children Quarreling
at Play)
Bydlo

Impromptu in G-flat Major, Opus 90, No. 3

INTERMISSION
(Twelve minutes)

Stanley Babin ........................................... Five Preludes
(1981)
C Major
A Minor
G Major
D Major
G Minor

Washington Premiere Performance

Frédéric Chopin ............ Etude in C-sharp Minor, Opus 25, No. 7
(1810-1849) (1827)
Ballade in G Minor, Opus 23

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

Pianist COLEMAN BLUMFIELD continues the historic tradition of the Romantic piano virtuosi, a legacy that stretches back more than one hundred-fifty years to Franz Liszt. From his early training in Chicago and advanced studies at the Curtis Institute of Music and with the late Vladimir Horowitz, to whom he has dedicated this recital, Mr. Blumfield has worked for the development of a broader artistic appreciation on the part of audiences of all ages. He was the first Artist-in-Residence of a major American city (Flint, Michigan), has toured on behalf of the State Department, performed at the White House and earned critical acclaim for performances all over the United States. His roster of highly succesful recitals includes events at New York’s 92nd Street Y, the Kennedy Center and George Mason University, as well as concerts in Denver, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati.

The phenomenon of the keyboard virtuoso who could take an audience by storm was well established long before the advent of Romantic music. One of the first musicians to distinguish himself in this way was Domenico Scarlatti. Not only was he the favorite court musician in a number of the great royal houses of Italy and Spain, but he also competed in public contests with other players. The most famous of these was organized in 1708 in Rome by a member of the Vatican Curia, one Cardinal Ottoboni. In this contest his rival was none other than George Frederic Handel, and the two were judged equals as virtuoso harpsichordists. Scarlatti composed more than 550 sonatas in the style of the three Mr. Blumfield performs this evening.

The title Impromptu suggests a piece which has the nature of an improvisation, as some of the works bearing this name in fact have. However, most of them have a consistent ternary form, and it is more likely that the name derives from the circumstances under which they were composed — a casual inspiration. Schubert wrote all of his eight Impromptus in 1827, just five years after the title had been used for the first time by the Czech composers Vorisek and Marschner.

The inspiration for Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition was his visits to the memorial exhibition of paintings by an artist friend, Victor Hartmann, who had died at a young age. Each of the movements is inspired by one of Hartmann’s paintings, and these are interspersed with repetitions of a short, slow march, the Promenade, which can be understood as a musical representation of the viewer’s progress through the gallery from one group of paintings to another. Mr. Blumfield incorporates a number of details into this performance that appear in the Lamm edition only and are based upon Mussorgsky’s original conception of the work. His transcription, utilizing the sonorities of the modern piano, has taken into account the score’s orchestral scope while continuing to adhere to Mussorgsky’s extraordinary musical ideas.

Babin’s Five Preludes and Toccata form a set of diverse miniatures for piano. These pieces are drawn from a larger collection, in which various modes are explored. In this smaller group, modality blends with a prevailing harmonic tonal center.