

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART CONCERTS

February and March, 1990

February

- 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, Franck and Fauré

March

- 4 National Gallery Orchestra
George Manos, *Conductor*
Henriette Schellenberg, *soprano*
Works by Rachmaninoff, Villa-Lobos and J.S. Bach
- 11 Glenda Maurice, *mezzo-soprano*
Ruth Palmer, *piano*
Songs by Poulenc, Vaughan Williams, Korngold and Marx
- 18 Vienna String Trio (Austria)
Works by Mozart, von Einem and Beethoven
- 25 Stephen Honigberg, *cello*
Kathryn Brake, *piano*
Works by Shostakovich, Bach and Schubert

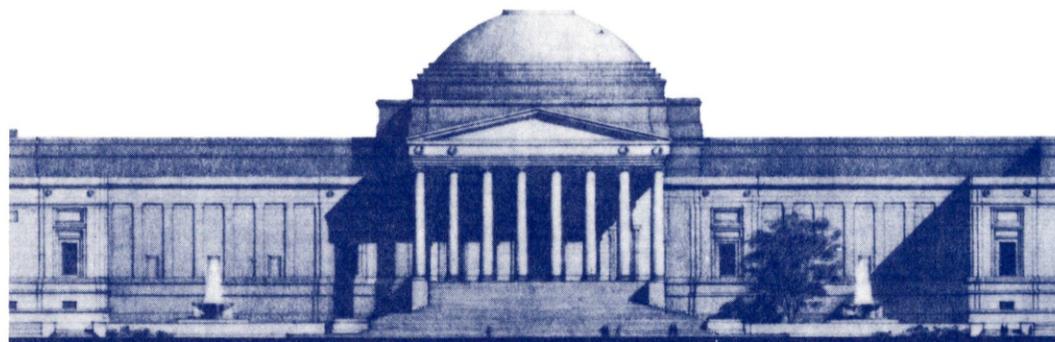
Concerts at the National Gallery are open to the public, free of charge.

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

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art

1956th Concert



NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA
GEORGE MANOS, *Conductor*
MERLIN PETROFF, *clarinet, Guest Artist*

Sunday Evening, February 4, 1990
at Seven O'clock
West Building, East Garden Court

PROGRAM

*In honor of the 75th Birthday of Richard Bales,
Conductor Emeritus of the National Gallery Orchestra
and Assistant to the Director for Music, 1943-1985*

César Franck Symphony in D Minor
(1822-1890) (1886-88)

Lento; allegro non troppo
Allegretto
Allegro non troppo

INTERMISSION
(*Twelve minutes*)

Claude Debussy Première rapsodie pour clarinette et orchestre
(1862-1918) (1911)

Debussy-arr. Richard Bales The Girl With the Flaxen Hair
(arr. 1944)

Richard Bales National Gallery Suite No. 1
(b. 1915) (1943)

Prelude
The Rotunda
Gallery Views
The Garden Courts
Machinery
The Life of Christ in Portraits and Statues
Great Heroes
Scherzo: Two Women
Finale

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

For forty-two years, from 1943-1985, the concerts at the National Gallery of Art were conceived and administered by one individual, Richard Bales, who devoted his full energies as conductor, composer and administrator to this series of free public concerts. By way of congratulations on his seventy-fifth birthday, the National Gallery Orchestra presents this program, which culminates in music which Richard Bales arranged and composed.

The *Symphony in D Minor*, along with all of the works of César Franck, will be heard frequently in 1990, which is the 100th anniversary of the composer's death. Franck was by every standard a mature and established composer before he finally turned to the composition of a symphony, and his untimely death meant that it was to be his only one. It is a work of monumental proportions — too monumental, in fact, for Franck's fellow professors at the Paris Conservatory, chief among whom was Charles Gounod, who dismissed the work as too loosely constructed and too long. Their judgment was proven wrong by the subsequent success and popularity of the work, which has become a staple of the symphonic repertoire.

Debussy composed his *Première rapsodie* as a piece for clarinet and piano for students to learn and play in an annual practical examination at the Paris Conservatory, where he was teaching. The piece was so well received that he decided to arrange the accompaniment for full orchestra. *La fille aux cheveux de lin* (The Girl With the Flaxen Hair) is a prelude from Debussy's *First Book of Preludes*, written in 1909-10. The essence of Debussy's gift as a composer is captured in his preludes for piano, which are impressionistic reflections on legends, dances, scenes of nature, or, as in the case of this prelude, human characteristics. It is significant that Debussy placed his evocative titles at the end of each of his preludes, as if to indicate that they represent only one of many impressions that could arise from the music.

National Gallery Suite No. 1 was the first project assigned by the Gallery to Richard Bales, even before he was called upon to administer the concerts. It was the result of a commission for the film score for a documentary produced by the Gallery, entitled *The National Gallery of Art*. As the titles of the movements indicate, the suite is an impressionistic work, drawing inspiration not only from the physical features of the building, but also from paintings that were part of the permanent collection at that time. *Mechanics*, for example, is inspired by the system of huge blowers, compressors and ducts, hidden from view above the ceilings and in the basement, which provide the heating and air conditioning for this large space. Among the works the composer had in mind when writing *The Life of Christ in Portraits and Statues* were Rembrandt's "Alba" *Madonna* and *Descent from the Cross*, as well as *The Dead Christ Supported by an Angel* (Upper Rhenish School, c. 1440.) The two women referred to by the subtitle of the *Scherzo* are Vermeer's *Woman Weighing Gold* and Rubens' *Isabella Brant*. The paintings shown on the screen as the *Finale* is heard in the film include Cuyp's *Man and Woman on Horseback*, Rembrandt's *The Mill* and, in a subtle nod to the music at the Gallery, Monet's *The Old Musician*. Receding views of the Gallery, as they might be seen by a departing visitor, are accompanied by the grand *tutti* which draws the *National Gallery Suite* to a close.