1977th Concert
October 7, 1990
NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA
GEORGE MANOS, Conductor

PROGRAM

Carl Nielsen ................................................................. Maskarade Overture
(1865-1931) (1906)

Maurice Ravel ................................ Ma mère l’oye (Mother Goose Suite)
(1875-1937) (1910)
Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant
Petit Poucet
Laiideronnette, Imperatrice des Pagodes
Les entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête
Le jardin féerique

INTERMISSION
(Twelve minutes)

Ludwig van Beethoven ....................... Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major
(1770-1827) Opus 55 (1803)
Allegro con brio
Marcia funebre
Scherzo: Allegro vivace
Finale: Allegro molto

Conductor, composer and pianist GEORGE MANOS has been music
director at the National Gallery and conductor of the National Gallery Or¬
chestra since 1985. A native of Washington, he was already organizing and
conducting orchestras and choirs in this city at the age of seventeen. First
among these was the New Washington Sinfonietta, followed in later years by
the Hellenic, Washington and National Oratorio Societies. As a student at
the Peabody Conservatory of Music, Manos studied composition under
Henry Cowell and chamber music under Oscar Shumsky and William Kroll,
while majoring in piano. He has taught piano, conducting and chamber
music at Catholic University and has served as director of the Wilmington,
Delaware, School of Music, where he initiated an annual jazz festival and
clinic. Manos founded and directed for ten years the renowned Killarney
Bach Festival in Ireland, and has recently been named director of a new
music festival in Kolding, Denmark, the Scandinavian Music Festival.

First convened in 1943 using members of the National Symphony, the
NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA has presented concerts in the Gal­
lery on a regular basis ever since. In the context of the annual American
Music Festival, it has presented the world premiere and Washington pre­
miere performances of one hundred thirty-seven works, including thirty-two
symphonies and fifteen concertos. The orchestra looks forward to presenting
five world premieres this season, all of which have been commissioned
as part of the Gallery’s Fiftieth Anniversary celebration. In addition, the
orchestra’s repertoire of established works continues to grow; this season’s
programs will include first performances at the Gallery of Beethoven’s
Seventh Symphony and Mahler’s Fourth Symphony.

The Danish composer Carl Nielsen wrote just two operas: Saul og David,
which is much like an oratorio in style, and Maskarade, which is an opera
buffa. Both works come from the early part of his career, when he was
particularly interested in musical characterization, using well-established
classical techniques of form, melody and harmony. The opera is based on a
play by the eighteenth century Danish writer, Ludvig Holberg, which
satirizes the daily life and entertainment of the Danish bourgeoisie of his
time. The overture leaves little doubt as to the comic nature of the opera it
introduces.

Ravel originally conceived Ma mère l’oye as a piano duet, composed for
and dedicated to children, and the 1910 world premiere of the duet was
performed by children: Christine Verger, age six, and Germaine Duramy,
age ten. The orchestral version followed a year later, and was the
accompaniment for a ballet. Each of the first four movements has reference
to a popular fairy tale: Sleeping Beauty, Hop o’ My Thumb, The Empress of
the Pagodas, and Beauty and the Beast, in which the role of the hapless beast
is given to the bassoons. The transformation of their theme by the solo violin
at the end of the movement reveals the beautiful person who is hidden within
the beast. The last movement is an epilogue, based on the opening theme.

Beethoven’s monumental Third Symphony, by his own admission the
composer’s favorite, passed far beyond anything he had thus far written in
length and musical drama. The striving modulations, stark transitions and
often obstinate rhythms were too much for most of Beethoven’s contem­
poraries, even some of his friends, who feared that he had gone too far with
his musical experimentation. The legend exists that Beethoven was inspired
by early reports reaching Vienna of Napoleon Bonaparte’s democratic re­
forms and humanitarian ideals to dedicate this symphony to him. However,
when the dictator’s true colors were revealed, Beethoven quickly withdrew
the dedication. There is a large hole in the title page of the original manu­
script in the library of the Musikverein in Vienna, purportedly cut by the
composer in a fit of rage and disappointment upon hearing that Napoleon had
crowned himself Emperor of France.
This concert was cancelled due to the close-down of the Federal Government.

This program was played on the following Sunday, October 14, 1990.