

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
Laideronnette, Impératrice 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 Orchestra 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 Gallery on a regular basis ever since. In the context of the annual American Music Festival, it has presented the world premiere and Washington premiere 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 contemporaries, 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 reforms 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 manuscript 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.