

1984th Concert

November 25, 1990

ANTON KUERTI, *pianist*

PROGRAM

Felix Mendelssohn Fantasia in F-sharp Minor
(1809-1847) Opus 28 (1833)

Con moto agitato; andante
Allegro con moto
Presto

Ludwig van Beethoven Sonata No. 30 in E Major
(1770-1827) Opus 109 (1820)

Vivace ma non troppo; adagio espressivo
Prestissimo
Gasangvoll, mit innigster Empfindung

INTERMISSION
(*Twelve minutes*)

Frédéric Chopin Sonata No. 3 in B Minor
(1810-1849) Opus 58 (1844)

Allegro maestoso
Scherzo: Molto vivace
Largo
Finale: Presto ma non tanto

Mr. Kuerti's appearance at the National Gallery has been assisted by a grant from the Canadian Embassy's Cultural Programme.

ANTON KUERTI was born in Vienna and emigrated to the United States at an early age. A pupil of Arthur Loesser, Mieczyslaw Horszowski and Rudolf Serkin, he played the Grieg Concerto in Boston under Arthur Fiedler when he was only 11 years old. He attracted world-wide attention when he won the Leventritt Award while still in his teens, and has since toured twenty-eight countries and performed with the world's major orchestras, including the National Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic. A resident of Canada, Mr. Kuerti has played repeatedly with every Canadian orchestra, including more than 30 concerts with the Toronto Symphony. He is heard regularly on CBC Radio and Television, and has recorded the complete piano sonatas of Beethoven, as well as all five concertos with the Toronto Symphony. Mr. Kuerti first played at the National Gallery on December 29, 1957, in a program that included the first performance in Washington of a prelude and toccata by Orlando Otey, entitled *Alacran*.

Mendelssohn wrote only a few extended compositions for piano solo, and the *Fantasia in F-sharp Minor* is one of the most impressive examples. The fantastic character of the work is embodied in the first and last movements, while the middle movement presents an extreme contrast in its gentleness.

Each movement of Beethoven's *Sonata, Opus 109* is like a sonnet, beautifully formed, not wasting a note, yet making a complete and meaningful statement. The work as a whole comes across as much more than just the sum of its parts, and presents the whole range of Beethoven's grand emotions in a relatively short space of time. As is the case in most of Beethoven's last works, there is no subordinate accompaniment in this music. The melodies and accompanying motives are of virtually equal importance, and the entire texture contributes to the musical substance. The second movement, wild and tumultuous, feels as though it would be an impossible act to follow, but Beethoven proves capable of surpassing himself as the final theme and variations unfolds. The gentleness of the theme leads one to believe that this movement will be a restful postlude to a work that has already reached its emotional high point, but this is certainly not the case. The relentless *fugato* of the fourth variation builds up to the climactic cadenza of the fifth. Even though the movement concludes with the theme in exactly the same notation as it was at the beginning, the effect is radically changed by what one has experienced since hearing it the first time.

Chopin's third sonata was the only work he produced in 1844, due primarily to the fact that he was distracted from composition by a hectic schedule of public appearances in the aristocratic salons of Paris. He had a further problem which slowed him down, which was the lack of a dependable copyist. He was obliged to write out everything three times, once each for publishers in France, Germany and England. His only quiet time came in the summer, which he spent away from the city, at Nohant. As it happened, his father died during the summer of 1844, which may account for the intimate quality and profound sadness of the slow passages in this sonata.