

1996th Concert

February 17, 1991

LILIAN KALLIR, *pianist*

PROGRAM

Felix Mendelssohn Variations sérieuses, Opus 54
(1809-1847) (1841)

Franz Joseph Haydn Sonata in C Major, Hob. XVI: 48
(1732-1809) (1789)

Andante con espressione
Rondo: Presto

Ludwig van Beethoven Sonata in A-flat Major, Opus 110
(1770-1827) (1821-22)

Moderato cantabile molto espressivo
Allegro molto
Adagio, ma non troppo
Allegro, ma non troppo (Fuga)

INTERMISSION
(Twelve minutes)

Frédéric Chopin Ballade in A-flat Major
(1810-1849) Opus 47 (1840-41)

Three Waltzes
Opus 64, No. 2, in C-sharp Minor
Opus 64, No. 1, in D-flat Major
Opus 42, in A-flat Major
Scherzo in B-flat Minor
Opus 31 (1837)

Tonight the National Gallery is pleased to be continuing its 50th anniversary concert season with a return engagement by pianist LILIAN KALLIR, who performed at the Gallery in 1950 and again in 1957. Renowned for the passionate eloquence of her performance, Miss Kallir has long been in the ranks of the world's outstanding pianists. Since her American debut at the age of seventeen with the New York Philharmonic, she has been engaged repeatedly by that and other great orchestras, including those of Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Berlin, Vienna and Leipzig. Her frequent tours of the United States regularly include such venues as Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In addition, she makes at least one concert tour a year in Europe, where her most recent

tour included performances in London's Royal Festival Hall, Vienna's *Musikverein* and Berlin's *Philharmonie*. An avid chamber musician, Miss Kallir has often collaborated with the Juilliard, Tokyo, Cleveland, Emerson and Guarneri string Quartets, and performs both four-hand and two-piano literature with her husband, pianist Claude Frank. Miss Kallir records for Sonic Arts Records and appears by arrangement with Columbia Artists Management, Inc., of New York City.

By Mendelssohn's time, the musical genre known as variations on a theme had been exploited by many composer-performers as a vehicle for mere virtuoso display in the form of cadenzas and technical acrobatics. Mendelssohn's *Variations sérieuses* have their share of technical display, but the addition of the word *sérieuses* to the title indicates the composer's intent to present a work of substance, rather than simply a display piece. His ability to create music which is not only finely constructed but also refined and delicate is fully in evidence in this work.

A program listing of two movements for a sonata seems incomplete to the modern eye, but was actually fairly common in eighteenth century Vienna, what with the strong influence there of the Italian school of keyboard composers, principal among whom were Alberti and Boccherini. They continued to compose sonatas in one, two, or even four movements long after their contemporaries in northern Europe had established three movements as their norm. Haydn was still adhering to the older Italian model when he wrote this *Sonata in C Major* in the late 1780's.

The first movement of Beethoven's *Sonata in A-flat, Opus 110* begins with a tribute to Haydn, in the form of a borrowed theme, and departs almost immediately from the accepted sonata form by presenting a sequence of different themes, with none of the customary repeats. The Haydn theme is heard once more, however, as the subject of the great fugue which comprises the last movement of the sonata, which begins calmly but builds gradually to an outpouring of grandeur infused with joy.

One of the myths surrounding the life of Chopin was propagated by Franz Liszt, who claimed that the *Ballade in A-flat Major, Opus 47* was improvised by Chopin on the spot for the poet Heinrich Heine. Whether or not this is true, Chopin did have a poem in mind as he composed this *ballade*. *Willi*, by the Polish poet, Adam Mickiewicz, tells the story of the water-nymph Ondine, who longed to leave the sea and live as a mortal. She obtained her wish by marrying a mortal, but was later rejected by him when he fell in love with another woman. Ondine avenged herself by attending her beloved's second wedding and greeting him with a kiss of death.

Another composer who worshiped at the altar of Chopin was Robert Schumann, whose opinion of Chopin's waltzes was that ". . . they seem to have been improvised in the ballroom. The dancers should be at least countesses and counts." The *Waltz in D-flat Major, Opus 64, No. 1*, commonly known as the "Minute" Waltz, has eclipsed all of the others in popularity. In his *Scherzi*, Chopin may well have been following Beethoven's example in transforming what had earlier been the lighthearted movement of a sonata or symphony into a work of large proportions and serious intent. The *Scherzo in B-flat Minor* gives the pianist an opportunity to display virtuosity while at the same creating passionate moods which are in turn grave, fierce, sardonic and melancholy.