1999th Concert
March 10, 1991
GRANT JOHANNESEN, pianist

PROGRAM

J. S. Bach ........................................ Prelude and Fugue in A Minor
(1685-1750) BWV 894

Franz Schubert ................................. "Grazer" Fantasie
(1797-1828) D. 605a (c. 1818)

Robert Schumann ......................... Faschingsschwank aus Wien
(1810-1856) Opus 26 (1839-40)
    Allegro
    Romanze
    Scherzino
    Intermezzo
    Finale

INTERMISSION
(Twelve Minutes)

Sergey Rachmaninoff, arr. Earl Wilde ........ Three Songs
    In the Silent Night
    The Little Island
    Where Beauty Dwells

Gabriel Fauré ................................. Two Impromptus
(1845-1924)
    No. 3 in A-flat Major, Opus 34
    No. 5 in F-sharp Major, Opus 102

Claude Debussy .......................... Hommage à Rameau from Images
(1862-1918) (1905)
    Soirée dans Grenade from Estampes
    L'Isle joyeuse

Exactly forty years and one month have passed since Grant Johannesen’s
first appearance as recitalist at the National Gallery. In February 1951, just at
the beginning of his career, Mr. Johannesen played a program that included
Beethoven’s Sonata, Opus 78, Schumann’s Fantasie, Opus 17 and works by
Debussy, Stravinsky and Roussel. Since that time, Grant Johannesen has
achieved international status of the highest order. His continuing engage­
ments with the world’s great symphony orchestras and his annual recitals in
the cultural capitals of many nations have consistently won for him the
highest critical praise. Both the New York Philharmonic and the Cleveland
Orchestra have chosen Mr. Johannesen to be their tour soloist for concerts in
the Soviet Union and other international venues. His performances have
repeatedly drawn high praise from the critics of the world’s great newspa­
pers, among them Harold Schonberg, who wrote, “He remains one of the
finest American pianists . . . a superior musician.” His recordings for Vox
Cum Laude, Golden Crest and Centaur are also highly prized. A Steinway
artist, Grant Johannesen appears by arrangement with ICM Artists, Ltd.,
New York.

During the years that he was employed by the Duke of Weimar, (1708-
1717), Bach served in a number of musical capacities, one of which was
performer and composer of music for the harpsichord. In addition to produc­ing
over two hundred keyboard works during those nine years, one of which
is the Prelude and Fugue that begins this program, he took on at least two
contracts for harpsichord repair. In 1717 Bach visited Dresden, where the
world-famous French harpsichordist, Louis Marchand, was giving recitals.
A court official persuaded Bach to challenge Marchand to a contest at the
harpsichord. After initially accepting the challenge, Marchand surreptiti­
ously left Dresden on the day before the contest was to take place, much to
the satisfaction and amusement of his German hosts.

Schumann wrote Faschingsschwank aus Wien after a particularly pleasant
visit to Vienna in 1839. In the spirit of Fasching, the pre-lenten revels
corresponding to mardi gras, he included a little private joke on the Vienn­
ese in the music. Ever since the Napoleonic wars, performance of the
French national anthem had been banned in Vienna, but Schumann saw to it
that a careful listener would hear a hint of the Marseillaise in the first
movement of his Faschingsschwank. This five-movement work, which
Schumann called a “romantic sonata,” stands out among his compositions in
its caprice, verve and impertinence, qualities for which the Viennese were
famous throughout the rest of Europe.

The pieces contained in the sets to which Debussy gave the titles Images
and Estampes are prime examples of the way in which his creative output
was influenced by symbolist poetry and impressionist painting. Not only are
the titles of the sets borrowed from the visual arts, but each piece has a title
or subtitle that calls to mind poetry as much as music. The manuscript for
Hommage à Rameau, for example, includes the subtitle, Souvenir du
Louvre. The listener can easily imagine the composer slowly wandering the
majestic halls of that great museum, experiencing ever greater inspiration as
he passes from gallery to gallery.