



2,000th CONCERT

celebrating and marking

THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

Sunday, March 17, 1991

7:00 P.M.

West Building, West Garden Court

NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA

GEORGE MANOS, *Conductor*

ARLEEN AUGER, *soprano, Guest Artist*

*Concerts at the National Gallery of Art are made possible
by funds bequeathed to the Gallery by William Nelson Cromwell
and F. Lamot Belin, with special support for this anniversary
concert provided by Miss Alice Tully.*

PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven Overture: The Consecration of the House
(1770-1827) Opus 124 (1822)

Richard Strauss Four Last Songs
(1864-1949) Opus 88 (1948)

Beim Schlafengehen
Frühling
September
Im Abendrot

INTERMISSION
(Twelve minutes)

Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 7 in A Major
Opus 92 (1811)

Poco sostenuto; vivace
Allegretto
Presto
Allegro con brio

Beethoven wrote *The Consecration of the House* for the rededication of the remodeled *Theater in der Josefstadt* in Vienna, which took place on 2 October, 1822. The auspicious occasion and the baroque charm of the building brought to Beethoven's mind the combination of ceremonialism and delicacy in Handel's overtures in French style, of which he was a great admirer. The influence of Handel can be heard in the dotted rhythms of the introduction to the overture and in the theme of the fugue that follows. By the close of the overture, however, Beethoven's own unmistakable style imbues the work with monumental proportions.

Richard Strauss' *Four Last Songs* are not only his last contribution to the art song, which was an important medium for him, but they are also the last compositions that he finished. A mood of farewell pervades the four songs, particularly *Im Abendrot* and *September*. It is, however, the farewell of a man who leaves the scene of earthly struggle and triumph without disappointment or reproach, without fear of destruction or doom, but with serene confidence in eternity and immortality. When the poet asks in *Im Abendrot*,

"Ist dies etwa der Tod?" ("Can this then be death?"), the horn answers with the transfiguration motif that Strauss had used sixty years before in his tone poem *Death and Transfiguration*.

Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony* brings to mind a dramatic celebration in movement and dance. The grand, slow-motion gestures of the opening *Poco sostenuto* and the dignified procession of the *Allegretto* imply an occasion of great moment and solemnity. Yet by the time one has experienced the ebullient leaps and bounds of the *Scherzo* and the *Allegro con brio*, there can be no doubt that there is room in this celebration for unrestrained joy, as well. All are bound together in a perfectly integrated whole, a masterpiece of architecture in sound.

As has often been the case with distinguished American singers, ARLEEN AUGER enjoyed her first major successes in Europe. Since her Vienna State Opera debut in 1967 as Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*, Miss Auger has become a familiar figure in Europe's most prestigious concert halls and opera houses, including Covent Garden, La Scala, the Vienna State Opera, and Amsterdam's Concertgebouw. In 1986, Miss Auger was seen by over 700 million television viewers as she sang Mozart's *Exultate, jubilate* at the royal wedding of Britain's Prince Andrew and Miss Sarah Ferguson.

Recognized later but no less enthusiastically in the United States, Arleen Auger has appeared at the major music festivals in this country and with the leading American orchestras, under the batons of Sir Georg Solti, Lorin Maazel, Leonard Bernstein, Seiji Ozawa, Riccardo Muti, and numerous other conductors. In addition to her appearance as soloist with the National Gallery Orchestra, her engagements this season have included concerts with the symphony orchestras of Cleveland, San Francisco, Boston, Dallas, and Pittsburgh, as well as the New York Philharmonic and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. Much in demand as a recitalist, her current season includes solo appearances in Chicago, Amsterdam, Lisbon, London, Paris, and Barcelona. Also included in her 1990-1991 itinerary are performances in Paris and Geneva of the title role in Handel's opera *Alcina*, a role she has recorded for EMI Records. In all, Miss Auger has a discography of more than one hundred sixty recordings, among them forty recordings of Bach cantatas and other sacred music under the direction of the renowned Bach specialist, Helmuth Rilling.

Arleen Auger's musicianship has been celebrated by a number of distinguished awards, including the *Grand prix du disque*, the Edison Prize, the *Deutscher Schallplattenpreis*, the Ovation Award, and the Grammy nominations. Her career was the subject of the cover feature article in the July 1990 issue of the national journal of classical music, *Musical America*.

PLEASE NOTE:

The Guest Artist in this evening's concert is dramatic soprano ALESSANDRA MARC, replacing Arleen Auger, who is ill. Ms. Marc sang her National Gallery debut in January of this year, in a critically acclaimed recital that included works by Beethoven, Schumann, Duparc, and Richard Strauss, a composer whose songs and operas are her speciality. In the course of the last two concert seasons, Ms. Marc has received ovations and rave reviews for performances in both the United States and Europe, including opera debuts in the role of Aida with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the San Francisco Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera. In the wake of her recent successes in works of Richard Strauss, she has been invited to sing the Four Last Songs in France and New Zealand, as well as concert performances of Salome and Friedenstag in the Netherlands. A resident of the Washington area, Alessandra Marc attended the University of Maryland and was a regional winner in the 1983 Metropolitan Opera auditions, which took place here at the National Gallery. She went on to represent the mid-Atlantic region in the national finals of the same competition, where she won the first prize. The Gallery deeply appreciates the cooperation of Miss Marc and her agency, Columbia Artists, Inc., of New York City, in providing her service to the fiftieth anniversary concert on just two days' notice.