

2014th Concert

June 23, 1991

MENAHEM PRESSLER, *pianist*

PROGRAM

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Sonata in A Major
(1756-1791) K. 331

Tema: Andante grazioso

Menuetto

Alla Turca: Allegretto

Felix Mendelssohn Two Songs Without Words
(1809-1847)

Opus 67, No. 35, in B Minor

Opus 67, No. 32, in F-sharp Minor

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 24 Preludes, Opus 28
(1810-1849) (1831-39)

No. 1 in C Major

No. 2 in A Minor

No. 3 in G Minor

No. 4 in E Minor

No. 5 in D Major

No. 6 in B Minor

No. 7 in A Major

No. 8 in F-sharp Minor

No. 9 in E Major

No. 10 in C-sharp Minor

No. 11 in B Major

No. 12 in G-sharp Minor

No. 13 in F-sharp Minor

No. 14 in E-flat Minor

No. 15 in D-flat Major

No. 16 in B-flat Minor

No. 17 in A-flat Major

No. 18 in F Major

No. 19 in E-flat Major

No. 20 in C Minor

No. 21 in B-flat Major

No. 22 in G Minor

No. 23 in F Major

No. 24 in D Minor

Tonight the National Gallery is pleased to be continuing its Fiftieth Anniversary concert season with a return engagement by pianist MENAHEM PRESSLER, who first appeared here in 1953. Born in Magdeburg, Germany, Mr. Pressler spent his youth in Israel, where he received his musical training. He began his professional career in the United States at the age of 17, when he won first prize in San Francisco's first International Debussy Competition. In 1948, Mr. Pressler made a five-concert debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy, and since then has appeared with nearly every major orchestra in the western world, including the Royal Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the National Symphony and the Boston Symphony, under such conductors as Dimitri Mitropoulos, George Szell, Leopold Stokowski, and Antal Dorati. A founder of the Beaux Arts Trio, Mr. Pressler has toured worldwide with that renowned ensemble for more than 30 years. He also appears frequently in recital and as guest artist with chamber ensembles including the Juilliard and Emerson String Quartets and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra.

Menahem Pressler currently holds the position of distinguished professor of music at the Indiana University School of Music. His many recordings as solo pianist and chamber musician appear on the Musical Heritage Society, Monitor, and Phillips labels. Mr. Pressler appears by arrangement with Melvin Kaplan, Inc., of Burlington, Vermont.

Mozart's *Sonata in A Major, K. 331* is such a widely known favorite that it is often mistakenly thought to be a typical example of his keyboard sonatas. In fact this sonata is not typical of Mozart at all, in that it has an unusual sequence of movements (theme and variations followed by minuet followed by rondo), lacks a slow movement as such, and introduces what may be described as a pseudo-orientalist flavor in *Rondo alla Turca*. This finale, one of Mozart's best known piano movements, is a delightful example of the innovations that appeared in Mozart's music after his visit to Paris in 1778. It is a rondo in French style, with alternating major and minor interludes.

The *Sonata in A-Flat Major, Opus 110*, is one of three piano sonatas that comprise Beethoven's supreme achievement in this form. In them he carries intimacy and subjectivism to levels never before reached in piano music, while at the same time transforming the formal framework of the classic sonata. Opus 110 represents a profound innovation in its use of dramatic recitative and generation of all themes in the work from one initial theme.

In composing a set of twenty-four preludes for piano, Chopin was fulfilling a model set by Johann Sebastian Bach in his *Well-Tempered Clavier*. This collection of preludes and fugues was already more than one hundred years old by the time Chopin decided to follow its example by composing twenty-four preludes, each in one of the major and minor keys that are possible in Western music. Whereas the format for the preludes comes out of a long-standing musical precedent, the pieces themselves are a compendium of Chopin's originality as a composer, ranging from poetic, intimate character pieces to bold mazurkas. Performed as a whole, as Menahem Pressler presents them this evening, they constitute a masterwork, with the satisfaction of the familiar intermingled with new revelation.