

2015th Concert

June 30, 1991

NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA

GEORGE MANOS, *Conductor*

PROGRAM

Paul Dukas ..... The Sorcerer's Apprentice  
(1865-1935) (1897)

Gabriel Fauré ..... Shylock, Opus 57  
(1845-1924) (1889)

Samuel Gordon, *tenor*

Chanson (*tenor*)

Entracte

Madrigal (*tenor*)

Epithalame

Nocturne

Finale

INTERMISSION

(*Twelve Minutes*)

Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov ..... Le coq d'or  
(1844-1908) (1906-7)

Introduction

Cortège de nocés du Roi Dedôn

Sergei Prokofiev ..... Romeo and Juliet Suite No. 3  
(1891-1953) Opus 101 (1946)

Romeo at the Fountain

Morning Dance

Juliet

Nurse

Aubade

Juliet's Death

First convened in 1942 using members of the National Symphony, the NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA has presented concerts in the Gallery on a regular basis ever since. In the context of the Gallery's American Music Festival, it has presented the world premiere and Washington premiere performances of one hundred forty works including thirty-three symphonies and fifteen concertos. It has had the privilege of playing the world premiere performances of significant works by nationally known composers,

among them the *First Symphony* of Charles Ives, David Diamond's *Concertino for Piano and Orchestra*, and Daniel Pinkham's *Fourth Symphony*. In addition, it has introduced to the world the first symphonies of two Washington composers, Russell Woollen and the late Emerson Myers. From 1943 to 1985 the National Gallery Orchestra was conducted by Richard Bales, during which time its membership grew to its present size of fifty-seven players. Since 1985, the orchestra has been under the direction of George Manos.

The origin of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* was part of a dialogue entitled *The Lie-Fancier*, written by the Greek satirist Lucian in the Second Century, A.D. The dialogue ridicules the sorcerers and pseudo-scientists of that period. In 1796, Goethe adapted Lucian's story with a comic ballad. A century later, Dukas arranged the tale in musical terms. The story involves a sorcerer who discovers a magic formula that transforms a piece of wood into a living servant. The sorcerer's apprentice overhears these words and accomplishes the feat himself while his master is away. He directs a broom to fetch water from the lake, soon realizing that he is unable to command the broom to stop. Frantic, he cleaves the broom in two with a hatchet, only to watch both sticks carry in more water. The brooms continue their task, promptly flooding the house. Dukas' work begins quietly, yet with mysterious hints of the story ahead. A famous bassoon melody sends the broom off on its errand. The music and water rise together while the brooms grow more furious in accomplishing the job. A sudden suspenseful pause has the apprentice wielding the hatchet, followed by water-carrying of twice the energy. The piece concludes with the sorcerer's return and the transformation of the workers back into brooms.

*Shylock* was written as incidental music for Edmond de Haraucourt's comedy based on Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*. Fauré valued incidental music as a form, claiming it was "the only [form] which is suited to my meager talents". His *Shylock* was written for and first performed in the famous *Theatre de l'Odéon* in Paris. The Odéon was founded in 1782, survived two fires and enjoyed intermittent royal support during the French restoration of the nineteenth century. It was directed for the first quarter of the 1800s by the notable comedic author Louis-Benoit Picard and introduced theatrical works by such notable authors as Victor Hugo (*Amy Rosbart*), Alexandre Dumas (*Charles VII*), and George Sand (*Claudie*). The Odéon was also the site of the first performances of incidental music by Mozart, DeGretry, Rossini, Meyerbeer, and Carl Maria von Weber.

Rimsky-Korsakov's *Le coq d'or* (translated *The Golden Cockerel*) was the last composition of his life. One of the great orchestrators of all time, Rimsky-Korsakov's operas are masterworks even when only the orchestral score is considered. He based *Le coq d'or* on Alexander Pushkin's fairy-tale satire of stupid aristocracy. Although the composition of the opera went smoothly, it encountered considerable trouble with the state censors, a struggle which aggravated Rimsky-Korsakov's already weakened condition, and this situation may have hastened his death in 1907. The opera was finally premiered in Moscow on October 7, 1909, over a year after the composer's death.

- notes by Humphreys McGee, III