

The *Polonaise-Fantaisie in A-flat Major* is Chopin's last *polonaise*, a musical form which he brought to its peak. It lacks none of the patriotic fervor and drama which characterize his earlier works in this form, and has in addition the poetic and narrative qualities of his ballades. The *polonaise* had been in existence for several centuries before Chopin's time, having started out as a rather formal processional dance at Polish balls and ceremonies. In his hands, however, it gained new life as a thrilling keyboard poem praising his native land, its struggles, its hopes, and its sorrows.

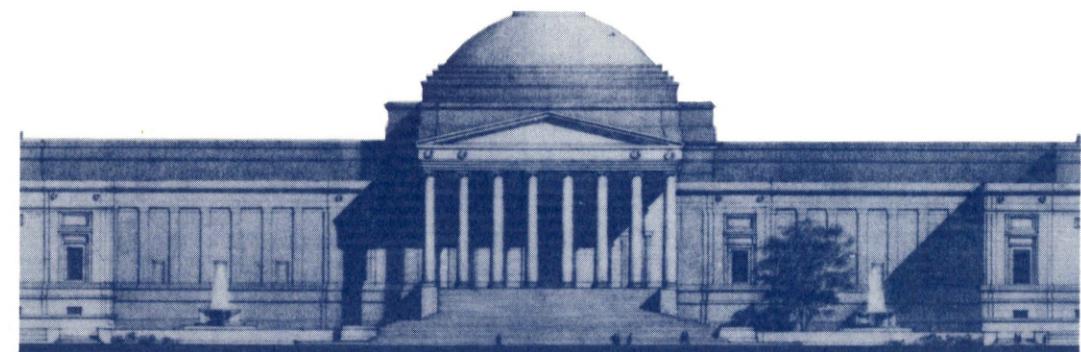
Like Chopin, George Gershwin lived only thirty-nine years, but was nevertheless able to mesmerize the entire music-loving public with his performances as a pianist and his compositions, which were hailed as a link between jazz and classical music. He was a talented painter as well as a musician, and his art collection included works by Picasso, Modigliani, Utrillo, Thomas Hart Benton, and many others among his contemporaries.

Debussy's two volumes of twelve preludes each contain the essence of his uniqueness as a composer. The preludes are truly impressionistic, not only because their titles refer to some extra-musical object or idea, but also because they are moments of music that exist in and of themselves, without any attempt to present a formal beginning, development, or end. Nevertheless, each is a satisfying entity, creating as it unfolds a form of its own. In some cases, such as *Brouillards* (*Mists*), *Ondine*, (*Water Sprite*), or *Feux d'artifice* (*Fireworks*), the composer's musical impression of the object in the title is fairly easy to grasp. In others, such as *Bruyères* (*Heaths*), or *Général Lavine*, the relationship between the title and the music is much more subtle, sometimes known only to the composer himself. It is revealing to note that, in his manuscript, Debussy placed the title of each prelude at the end of it, not at the beginning, and presumably chose the title after the music had already been conceived.

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and  
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

at the

National Gallery of Art



2109th Concert

PETER TAKACS, *pianist*

*Concerts from the National Gallery are broadcast in their entirety at 7:00 p.m. on Sundays on radio station WGTS, 91.9 FM, four weeks after the live performance. The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.*

*For the convenience of concertgoers, the Garden Café remains open until 6:30 p.m.*

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Sunday Evening, January 30, 1994  
at Seven O'clock  
West Building, East Garden Court  
*Admission free*

## PROGRAM

Domenico Scarlatti  
(1685-1757)

K. 119, in D Major  
K. 426, in G Minor  
K. 427, in G Major

Frédéric Chopin  
(1810-1849)

Opus 41, No. 2, in B Major  
Opus 50, No. 3, in C-sharp Minor  
Opus 56, No. 2, in C Major

Polonaise-Fantaisie in A-flat Major  
Opus 61 (1845-46)

## INTERMISSION

Béla Bartók  
(1881-1945)

Joc cu bâta (Dance with a Staff)  
Brâul (Belt-dance)  
Pe loc (Stamper)  
Buciumeana (Dance from Bucium)  
Rumanian Polka  
Maruntel (Lively Dance)

Claude Debussy  
(1862-1918)

Brouillards  
La puerto del Vino  
Bruyères  
“Général Lavine”  
Ondine  
Feux d’artifice

## Three Sonatas

George Gershwin  
(1898-1937)

*from* The Gershwin Songbook

The Man I Love  
Fascinating Rhythm  
I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise  
Swanee  
'S Wonderful  
Sweet and Low Down  
Do It Again  
Strike up the Band  
Who Cares  
I Got Rhythm

To the delight of audiences everywhere, internationally acclaimed pianist PETER TAKACS has returned to the concert stage. A native of Bucharest, Romania, Mr Takács is a legend both in the United States and abroad. From an early age, his pianistic proficiency was so extraordinary that he received full scholarships wherever he attended, including the Conservatoire de Paris, Northwestern University, the University of Illinois, and the Peabody Conservatory of Music, where he completed his artistic training with Leon Fleisher. Mr. Takács has performed as a guest soloist with major orchestras in the United States, Europe, and the Far East, and at such prestigious summer festivals as Tanglewood, the Eastern Music Festival, the La Gesse Festival in Toulouse, France, and at the Chautauqua Institution. Mr. Takács is presently on the piano faculties of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and the Chautauqua Institution. He is also the music director of the Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra.

Among the several musical forms which for Chopin had patriotic overtones, his *mazurkas* stand out on account of both their compactness and their variety. Originally a Polish dance of heroic cast, the *mazurka* has a basic rhythm in triple meter with the principal accent on the second or third beat of the measure, rather than on the first. Some of the early Chopin *mazurkas* are straightforward enough to be danced to, but the later ones, from which Mr. Takács has made his selection, are elevated to the level of musical poems, reflecting on the full range of human emotions, from sheer happiness to utter despair.

*from* Preludes - Book II  
(1913)