CONCERTS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
Under the Direction of George Manos

April 1998
12 No Concert
19 Stefan Vladar, pianist
26 Nelson Freire, pianist

J. S. Bach: Goldberg Variations
Brahms: Sonata No. 3
Chopin: Scherzo No. 4
Schumann: F Minor Fantasy Papillons

May 1998

THE FIFTY-FIFTH AMERICAN MUSIC FESTIVAL
MAY 3 THROUGH 31, 1998

3 National Gallery Orchestra
George Manos, conductor

Copland: Appalachian Spring
Robert Ward: Symphony No. 3
Sotireos Vlahopoulos: Ode (World premiere)

Charles Ives: In the Mornin’
The Collection Slow March
Kären
D. Waxman: Four Songs
of the Seasons
Nancy Daley: Five Amusements
(Four Madrigals)

Robert Kennedy, baritone
Francis Conlon, pianist

Rosa Lamorcaux, soprano
Beverly Benso, contralto
Samuel Gordon, tenor

17 Upper Valley Duo
Tim Schwarz, violinist
Dan Weiser, pianist

Wm. G. Still: Suite for Violin and Piano
Amy Beach: Sonata for Violin and Piano
W. C. Handy: St. Louis Blues

24 New England Spiritual Ensemble
Vincent Dion Stringer, artistic director
Fredericka King, pianist

American Spirituals and Gospel songs

The Fifty-sixth Season of
THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA
GEORGE MANOS, conductor
JASON STEARNS, baritone, guest artist

Sunday Evening, April 5, 1998
at Seven O’Clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission Free
BARITONE JASON STEARNS has recently enhanced his already established reputation as one of Washington’s premiere singers by joining the roster of the New York City Opera. In addition to singing Lehar’s The Merry Widow in New York, Mr. Stearns has recorded the baritone solos in John Corigliano’s Of Rage and Remembrance, which won a 1997 Grammy Award. He has appeared in leading baritone roles with Opera Camerata of Washington, the Opera Theater of Northern Virginia, and the Summer Opera Theater. Also much in demand as an oratorio singer, Mr. Stearns has appeared with the Reston Chorale, the National Chamber Orchestra, and the Cathedral Choral Society. As Sergeant First Class in the U.S. Army Chorale, he sings regularly at state and military ceremonies throughout the country. The bicentennial of the birth of Gaetano Donizetti finds him appearing as soloist in that composer’s Requiem, as well as in the operas Mario Falliero and Maria di Rohan. An avid sailor and gardener, Jason Stearns resides in McLean, Virginia with his wife Suzanne and their son Aaron.

The four movements making up Chabrier’s Suite pastorale are orchestrations of pieces from his Dix pièces pittoresques for solo piano, written in 1880 and published the following year. Chabrier began his professional life as a civil servant, but turned to music as his full-time occupation in the late 1870s. The Dix pièces pittoresques were the first pieces he released for publication, and they earned him immediate recognition as a composer. Commenting on some of the pieces as he heard them in concert, César Franck (1822–1890) stated: “We have just heard something quite out of the ordinary run. This music is a bridge between our own times and those of Couperin and Rameau.” A contemporary English critic, Bryce Morrison, maintained that Chabrier’s pieces were “zigzagging recklessly between Schumann and Offenbach, yet maintaining a peculiar individuality [with] their melodic directness and pungent rhythms [that] are wonderfully fresh and immediate.”

Emmanuel Chabrier has the distinction of being the only composer to appear in Degas’ paintings of scenes from the Paris Opera. He is seen peering intently out of the composer’s box at stage right in The Orchestra of the Opera (1868–1869).

Debussy's Trois ballades de François Villon uses texts from the fourteenth-century poet named in the title. (The texts are on pages 5 through 7 of the program.) The composer’s use of modal harmonies is highly complementary to the ancient milieu of the poetry, with exquisite results. In the Ballad of Villon to His Beloved, the singer is instructed to sing with “an expression as much
of anguish as of regret," while the lover's shifting emotions are underscored by the changes in the orchestral accompaniment. The second ballad, the text of which is a prayer to the Virgin, has a simple tonal scheme that suggests a deep, reverent faith. The third, Ballad of the Women of Paris, is a wry comment on a subject in which both Villon and Debussy were well versed.

Saint-Saëns' Second Symphony is classical in structure and concise in comparison with many of the other works he wrote in the late 1850s and 1860s. It heralds the light, linear style of composition that eventually became the rule rather than the exception in his later works. The opening movement has two parts: an introductory allegro marcato followed by a fugal allegro appassionato, with the contrast being one of emphasis, rather than tempo. The Adagio, with its pastoral solos sung by the flute and English horn, generates a graceful swirl of charming themes. The final two movements, Scherzo presto and Prestissimo, provide a contrast to the preceding gentle movement. The former presents passages reminiscent of both Beethoven and Brahms, while the latter, with its frenzied whirl, is a rambunctious tarantella of gasping recklessness. Its twirling, scintillating conclusion introduces the diabolical drive that is another of Saint-Saëns' trademarks.

-Program notes by Elmer Booze

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**Ballade de Villon à s'amye**
(Ballad of Villon to His Beloved)

Faulse beauté, qui tant me couste cher,
Rude en effect, hypocrite douceur,
Amour dure, plus que fer, à mascher;
Nommer te puis de ma deffaçon soeur.

Charme felon, la mort d'ung povre cœur,
Orgueil mussé, qui gens met au mourir,
Yeux sans pitié! Ne veult droitier de rigueur,
Sans empirer, ung povre secourir?

Mieulx m'eust valu avoir este crier
Ailleurs secours, c'est esté mon bonheur:
Rien ne m'eust seceu de ce fait arracher;
Trotter m'en fault en fuyte à deshonneur.

Haro, haro, le grand et le mineur!
Et qu'est ce-cy? Mouray sans coup ferir,
Ou pitié peult, selon ceste teneur,
Sans empirer, ung povre secourir.

Vieil je seray; vous, laide et sans couleur.

Prince amoureux, des amans le greigneur,
Vostre mal gré ne vouldroye encourir;
Mais tout franc cueur doit, par Nostre Seigneur,
Sans empirer, ung povre secourir.

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The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

For the convenience of concertgoers, the Garden Cafe remains open until 6:30 pm.
Ballade que Villon feit à la request de sa mère
(Ballad Written by Villon at the Request of His Mother)

Dame du ciel, regente terricenne,
Emperiere des infernaulx palux,
Que comprinse soye entre vox esleuz,
Les biens de vous, ma dame et ma maistresse,
Sont trop plus grans que ne suys pecheresse,
Sans lesquelz bien ame ne peult merir
N'avoir les cieux, je n'en suis menteresse.
En ceste foy je vueil vivre et mourir.

A vostre Filz dictes que je suys sienne;
De luy soyent mes pechez aboluz:
Tell your Son that I am his;
By him have my sins been absolved:
Pardon me, as the Egyptian woman,
Whom you forgave and absolved
Even though he had sold his soul to the devil.

Pray for me, let me not sin;
Verge portant sans rompure encourir
Virgin, who carries without defect
Thesacrament celebrated at the Mass.
In this faith I wish to live and die.

Femme je suis povrette et ancienne,
Qui riens ne s"ay, oncques lettres ne leuz;
Au moustier voy dont suis paroissienne,
Et ung enfer oû damnez sont boulluz:
Au monastere where I am a parishioner,
And a hell where the damned boil.
The one horrifies me, the other
And the others give me joy and pleasure.

A qui pecheurs doibvent tous recourir,
Brettes, Suysses, n'y sgavent gueres,
Two haranguers from Petit-Pont
Le Petit-Pont deux harangeres,
Les concluront, et les Lorraines,
Il ne bon bec que de Paris.

La joye avoir fais-moy, haulte Deesse,
Et unge quepechers doibvent tous recourir,
Comblez de foy, sans faincte ne paresse.
En ceste foy je vueil vivre ....

Ballade des femmes de Paris
(Ballad of the Women of Paris)

Quoy qu'on tient belles langagières
Florentines, Veniciennes,
Assez pour estre messaigieres,
Et mesmement les anciennes;
Mais, soient Lombardes, Romaines,
Suis, Lombardes, Romans,
Genoveses, à ses perils,
Du Petit-Pont deux harangere,
Il n'est bon bec que de Paris.

De beau parler tiennent chayeres,
Ce diton Napolitaines,
Et que sont bonnes cacquetieres Allemandes et Brucienelles;
Soient Grecques, Egyptiennes,
De Hongrie ou d'autre pais,
Espaignolles ou Castellannes,
Il n'est bon bec que de Paris.

Brettes, Suysses, n'y scavent gueres,
Ne Gascons et Tholouzaines;
Les concluront, et les Lorraines,
Picardes, de Valenciennes....
II ne bon bec que de Paris.

Prince, aux dames parisiennes,
De bien parler donnez le prix;
Quoy qu'on die d'Italiennes,
Il n'est bon bec que de Paris.

When one considers ladies of beautiful speech:
Florentines and Venetians
Are rather suited as messengers,
As they were in ancient times.
But, be they Lombards, Romans,
Genoese, at my peril,
Piedmontese, Savoyards,
No mouths match those of Paris.

Chairs in beautiful language are held by Neapolitan women,
And what fine chatterers are the German and Prussian women;
Be they Greeks, Egyptians,
From Hungary or some other country,
Spanish women or Castilians,
No mouths match those of Paris.

Bretons, Swiss, they have no answer,
Nor do Gascons or Toulousains;
Two haranguers from Petit-Pont
Would finish them, and the ladies of Lorriane,
England, or Calais,
(Have I included enough of them?)
Picards, women from Valenciennes...
No mouths match those of Paris.

Prince, to the ladies of Paris
Give the prize for beautiful speech;
Say what you may of the Italians,
No mouths match those of Paris.