

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

April 1998

12 No Concert

19 Stefan Vladar, *pianist*      J. S. Bach:      *Goldberg Variations*  
26 Nelson Freire, *pianist*      Brahms:      *Sonata No. 3*  
Chopin:      *Scherzo No. 4*  
F Minor Fantasy  
Schumann:      *Papillons*

May 1998

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

3 National Gallery      Copland:      *Appalachian Spring*  
Orchestra      Robert Ward:      *Symphony No. 3*  
George Manos, *conductor*      Sotireos Vlahopoulos: *Ode*  
(World premiere)

10 National Gallery Vocal      Charles Ives:      *In the Mornin'*  
Arts Ensemble      *The Collection*  
George Manos, *artistic*      *Slow March*  
*director*      *Kären*  
Rosa Lamoreaux, *soprano*      D. Waxman:      *Four Songs*  
Beverly Benso, *contralto*      *of the Seasons*  
Samuel Gordon, *tenor*      Nancy Daley:      *Five Amusements*  
Robert Kennedy, *baritone*      (World premiere)  
Francis Conlon, *pianist*      Ned Rorem:      *Four Madrigals*

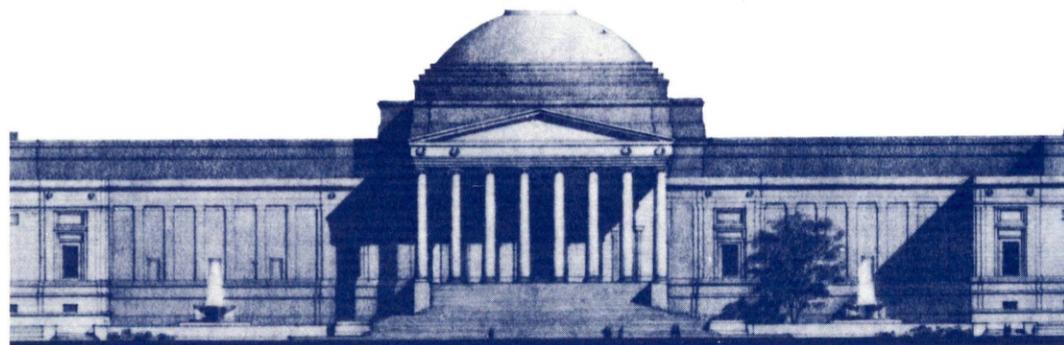
17 Upper Valley Duo      Wm. G. Still:      *Suite for Violin*  
Tim Schwarz, *violinist*      *and Piano*  
Dan Weiser, *pianist*      Amy Beach:      *Sonata for Violin*  
W. C. Handy:      *and Piano*  
*St. Louis Blues*

24 New England Spiritual Ensemble      American Spirituals  
Vincent Dion Stringer,      and Gospel songs  
*artistic director*  
Fredericka King, *pianist*

*The Fifty-sixth Season of*

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and  
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



*2266th Concert*

NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA

GEORGE MANOS, *conductor*

JASON STEARNS, *baritone, guest artist*

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

*Admission Free*

## PROGRAM

Presented in honor of the Exhibition: *Degas at the Races*  
(12 April through 12 July, 1998)

Emmanuel Chabrier  
(1841–1894) Suite pastorale  
(1888)

Idylle  
Danse villageoise  
Sousa bois  
Scherzo valse

Claude Debussy  
(1862–1918) Trois ballades de François Villon  
(1910)

- I. Ballade de Villon à s'amyé  
(Ballad of Villon to His Beloved)
- II. Ballade que Villon fait à la requête de  
sa mère  
(Ballad written by Villon at the Request of  
His Mother)
- III. Ballade des femmes de Paris  
(Ballad of the Women of Paris)

## INTERMISSION

Camille Saint-Saëns  
(1835–1921) Symphony No. 2 in A Minor, Opus 55  
(1859)

Allegro moderato  
Adagio  
Scherzo presto  
Prestissimo

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

*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 de Villon à s’amyé  
(Ballad of Villon to His Beloved)

Fausse 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  
cueur,  
Orgueil mussé, qui gens met au  
mourir,  
Yeulx sans pitié! Ne veult droict  
de rigueur,  
Sans empirer, ung povre secourir?

Mieulx m’eust valu avoir esté crier  
Ailleurs secours, c’eust esté mon  
bonheur:  
Rien ne m’eust sceu 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.

Ung temps viendra, qui fera  
desseicher,  
Jaulnir, flestrir, vostre espanie  
fleur:  
J’en risse lors, se tant peusse  
marcher,  
Mais las! nenny: Ce seroit donc  
foleur,

Vieil je seray; vous, laide et sans  
couleur.  
Or, beuvez fort, tant que ru peult  
courir.  
Ne donnez pas à tous ceste douleur  
Sans empirer ung povre secourir.

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.

False loveliness, costing a heavy  
price,  
Rude, yet seeming soft and fair;  
Hard love, harder than iron!  
Say it, I am your captive.

Love like a thief, that steals on  
one unseen,  
Pride with a mask, that one dons on  
pain of death;  
Pitiless eyes, will you not see my  
situation?  
Make life no worse for a poor soul!

I would far rather have cried to you  
For help that would have cheered me.  
That painful act would have had no  
result;  
Only a hasty flight into dishonor.

Help, help, great and small!  
What’s this? Must I die  
without striking a single blow?  
Are you a stone, devoid of pity?  
Make life no worse for a poor soul!

A time will come when your bloom  
will have faded,  
Seared and dried your beautiful  
flower of Spain:  
Then I shall laugh, laugh like the  
fool that I am!  
But, alas, that would be the crown  
of folly.

I shall grow old; you ugly, dull,  
and colorless.  
So drink up, before the river goes  
dry.  
Don’t spread this sorrow further.  
Make life no worse for a poor soul!

Amorous prince, of all lovers the  
king,  
Your illness would appear incurable.

Yet all may say openly, by our Lord,  
Make life no worse for a poor soul!

Ballade que Villon fait à la request de sa mère  
(Ballad Written by Villon at the Request of His Mother)

Dame du ciel, regente terrienne,  
Emperière des infernaux palux,  
Recevez-moy, vostre humble  
chrestienne,  
Que comprinse soy entre vox esleuz, Ce non  
obstant qu'oncques riens ne  
valuz.  
Les biens de vous, ma dame et ma  
maistresse,  
Sont trop plus grans que ne suys  
pecheresse,  
Sans lesquelz bien ame ne peut  
merir  
N'avoir les cieulx, 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:  
Pardonnez-moy comme à l'Egyptienne,  
Ou comme il fait au cler  
Theophilus,  
Lequel par vous fut quitte et  
absoluz,  
Combien qu'il eust au diable fait  
promesse;  
Preservez-moy que je n'accomplisse  
ce!  
Vierge portant sans rompure encourir  
Le sacrement qu'on celebre à la  
messe.  
En ceste foy je vueil vivre ....

Femme je suis povrette et ancienne,  
Qui riens ne sçay, oncques lettres  
ne leuz;  
Au moustier voy dont suis  
paroissienne,  
Paradis painct où sont harpes et  
luz;  
Et ung enfer où damnez sont boulluz:  
Lung me fait paour, l'autre joye  
et liesse.  
La joye avoir fais-moy, haulte  
Deesse,  
A qui pecheurs doibvent tous  
recourir,  
Comblez de foy, sans faincte ne  
paresse.  
En ceste foy je vueil vivre ....

Lady of heaven, queen of earth,  
Empress of purgatory,  
Receive me, your humble Christian  
woman,  
Among those counted as your elect.  
Well do I know that I am nothing on  
my own.  
Your virtues, my lady and my  
mistress,  
Are infinitely greater than my many  
sins;  
Without your help, no one can hope  
to rise to heaven -  
This I know all too well.

In this faith I wish to live and  
die.

Tell your Son that I am his;  
By him have my sins been absolved:  
Pardon me, as the Egyptian woman,  
Or as the scribe Theophilus,  
Whom you forgave and absolved  
Even though he had sold his soul to  
the devil.  
Preserve me from such a fate!  
Virgin, who carries without defect  
The sacrament celebrated at the  
Mass.  
In this faith I wish to live and  
die.  
I am an old, impoverished woman  
Who knows nothing, neither reading  
nor writing.  
At the monastery where I am a  
parishioner, there are paintings  
of paradise, with harps and lyres,  
And a hell where the damned boil.  
The one horrifies me, the other  
gives me joy and pleasure.  
Let me have the joy, exalted  
Goddess,  
To whom all sinners may have  
recourse,  
Filled with the faith, without  
weakness or sloth.  
In this faith I wish to live and  
die.

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

Quoy qu'on tient belles langagières  
Florentines, Veniciennes,  
Assez pour estre messaigières,  
Et mesmement les anciennes;

Mais, soient Lombardes, Romaines,  
Genevoises, à mes perils,  
Piemontoises, Savoysiennes,  
Il n'est bon bec que de Paris.

De beau parler tiennent chayeres,  
Ce diton Napolitaines,  
Et que sont bonnes cacquetières  
Allemandes et Bruciennes;

Soient Grecques, Egyptiennes,  
De Hongrie ou d'autre país,  
Espaignolles ou Castellannes,  
Il n'est bon bec que de Paris.

Brettes, Suysse, n'y sçavent  
guères,  
Ne Gasconnes et Tholouzaines;  
Du Petit-Pont deux harangères,  
Les concluront, et les Lorraines,

Anglesches ou Callaisiennes,  
(Ay-je beaucoup de lieux compris?)  
Picardes, de Valenciennes...  
Il 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,  
Genoans, 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 Toulousaines;  
Two haranguers from Petit-Pont  
Would finish them, and the ladies of  
Lorraine,  
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.