Liszt’s Six Consolations were completed and published between 1849 and 1850. With its sumptuous key of D-flat major, the Consolation is reminiscent of Chopin’s nocturne in the same key. It is considered one of Liszt’s unofficial tributes to Chopin on the occasion of his death in 1849. It was and has remained a popular favorite of students and concert artists alike.

Liszt’s Mephisto Waltz No. 1 is a transcription for piano of the second of two pieces entitled Episodes from [Nikolaus] Lenau’s “Faust”. With its diabolical and sorcerous flashes, it reflects the composer’s preoccupation with the legend of Faust, as recounted in Lenau’s poem. Although Liszt composed three other Mephisto Waltzes, none has reached the popularity of the first. Its “bold harmonies and vivid exploitation of instrumental color,” to quote music critic Patrick Racket, “have made it one of the most often played of Liszt’s works.”

- 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.

The Fifty-fifth American Music Festival
May 3 through 31, 1998

Under the Direction of George Manos

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
Sotirios Vlahopoulos: Ode

World premiere)

10 National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble
Rosa Lamoreaux, soprano
Beverly Berensohn, contralto
Samuel Gordon, tenor
Robert Kennedy, baritone
Francis Conlon, pianist

Charles Ives: In the Morning
The Collection
Die March
Nancy Daley: Four Amusements
Donald Waxman: Four Songs of the Seasons
Ned Roem: Four Madrigals
Steven Weber: Five Nursery Rhymes

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

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

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

American Spirituals and Gospel Songs

31 Washington Men’s Camerata
Thomas Beveridge, conductor
Michael Patterson, pianist

Randall Thompson: Testament of Freedom
Vincent Persichetti: Song of Peace
Billings: When Jesus Wept

Plus works for men’s chorus by
Copland, Virgil Thomson, and Thomas Beveridge

The Fifty-sixth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell, and
E Lamont Belin Concerts

Nelson Freire, pianist

2268th Concert

Sunday Evening, April 26, 1998
at Seven O’clock
West Building, West Garden Court
Admission Free
PROGRAM

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)
Sonata No. 3 in F Minor
Opus 5 (1853)

Allegro maestoso
Andante espressivo
Scherzo: Allegro energico
Finale: Allegro moderato ma rubato

Robert Schumann
(1810–1856)
Papillons, Opus 2
(1829–1831)

Frédéric Chopin
(1810–1849)
Fantasy in F Minor
Opus 49 (1841)
Scherzo No. 4 in E Major
Opus 54 (1843)

Franz Liszt
(1811–1886)
Consolation No. 3 in D-Flat Major
(1849–1850)

Mephisto Waltz No. 1

“Dance in the Village Inn” (1862)

INTERMISSION

Robert Schumann
(1810–1856)
Papillons, Opus 2 (1829–1831)

Frédéric Chopin
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Fantasy in F Minor Opus 49 (1841)
Scherzo No. 4 in E Major Opus 54 (1843)

Franz Liszt
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Consolation No. 3 in D-Flat Major (1849–1850)

Mephisto Waltz No. 1

“Dance in the Village Inn” (1862)

Born in Brazil in 1944, NELSON FREIRE made his first public appearance at the age of four. His teachers at that time were Nise Obino and Lucía Branco. In 1957 he won the Rádio Japonês Interna tional Piano Competition with his performance of Beethoven’s Emperor Concerto. The President of Brazil presented Freire with a financial scholarship that enabled him to continue his studies with Bruno Seidlhofer in Vienna. Seven years later, Mr. Freire won the Diru Lipatti Medal in London, as well as first prize at the Interna tional Vienna da Motta Competition in Lisbon. He made his United States recital debut in 1970, playing Rachmaninoff’s Fourth Pi ano Concerto with the New York Philharmonic, and his New York recital debut took place the next day. Since then he has performed recitals in Boston, Washington, DC, and Fort Worth, Texas, and concerts with the symphony orchestras of New York, Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Baltimore, and Denver, among others. In addition to numerous recitals throughout Europe, Mr. Freire has performed with the Berlin Philharmonic, the London Symphony, and the Orchestre National de France under such distinguished conductors as Rudolf Kempe, Pierre Boulez, André Previn, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, and David Zinman. He has recorded music of Chopin and Villa-Lobos for the SONY Classical, IPAM, London, and Teldec labels, and his newest recording was released by Berlin Classics in the summer of 1995. It features Franz Liszt’s Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 2 and Tànenten/Dance Mästhet with the Dresden Philharmonic, conducted by Michel Plasson. A Steinway artist, Nelson Freire appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Columbia Artists Management, Inc., of New York.

Brahms composed all three of his piano sonatas early in his career. The third is deemed not only the most magnificent of the three, but has been placed in the same arena of greatness as the mighty B Minor Sonata of Liszt. Brahms’ early compositions were mainly virtuoso, without regard for the substance. In the Sonata Opus 5 we find him ripening from his early powerful expression of emotion to a compact and more comprehensive use of musical forms. His later music contains a wealth of contrapuntal devices, including canons, fugues, retrogrades, inversions, and even retrograde inversions. All are used with an uncompromising lucidity that preserves rather than obliterates the melodic and harmonic balance. As the Belgian music critic Harry Halbreich put it: “Brahms…speaks from his rich and dark pianistic style… We have an almost orchestral outgrowing of the keyboard’s possibilities. Series of parallel thirds, octaves and above all, sixths (Brahms’ favorite and most idiomatic interval) create a sense of truly symphonic volume. Brahms’ music calls for large hands and keeps all ten fingers busy most of the time. But, massive as it may be, it never becomes obscure or opaque as long as it is properly performed…” Schumann was sufficiently aroused by Brahms’ music to praise him as the “young eagle [and] he who had to come” in the Neue Zeitschrift fur Musik, a progressive journal Schumann helped to found. He described Brahms’ early piano works as “…veiled symphonies, so orchestral are they both in inspiration and pianistic writing.”

Papillons, Opus 2 was written shortly before Schumann permanently injured a finger, which terminated his career as a concert pianist. The work is a series of dances, some based on waltzes and four-hand polonaises Schumann had composed previously. He acknowledged the influence of a novel, Flegeljahre, by Jean Paul, in the conception of the work, although it has no stated program. However, there is one marginal note in the score that refers to the final scene in the novel, a masked ball. Next to a bizarre passage in the final waltz, in which six accented notes penetrate an otherwise soft, hazy texture, the narrator writes: “The noise of the carnival night grows silent. The tower clock strikes six.”

Composed in 1841, Chopin’s F Minor Fantasy Opus 49 stands along side the fantasies of Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert in importance and historical significance. James Huneker (1857–1921), in his introductory statements to Rafael Joseffy’s critical edition of the Chopin Scherzo and Fantasy, said: “Its melodies, though restless and melancholy, are of surpassing nobility and dramatic grandeur. It is [Chopin’s] largest canvas…. The virtuoso makes way for the poet…. The interest is not relaxed until the final bar.”

Chopin wrote six scherzi, one each for his two sonatas and four that deal of musical substance, which include the Scherzo No. 4 in E Major, Opus 54. It has been the favorite of many pianists, including Saint-Saëns, who claimed he loved it more than any other work by Chopin. It embodies the true concept of the scherzo as Chopin conceived it, with its myriad trills, staccato chords, and radiant legato passage-work. It is sunnier in mood than his other scherzi, being in the key of E Major. This scherzo contains some of Chopin's most fortuitous ideas, cultivated with his unique ability to use the keyboard as a chromatic paintbrush.

Inspired by the poems of Charles Sainte-Beuve (1804–1869),