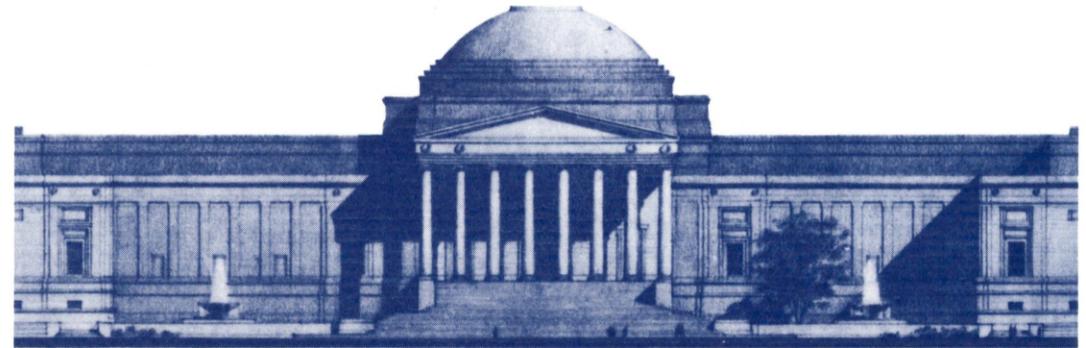


The Fifty-seventh Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
E. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2297th Concert

NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA

GEORGE MANOS, *conductor*

Sunday Evening, February 7, 1999
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

What is more frequently heard today is the orchestrated version by Debussy's friend and colleague, Henri Büsser (1872–1973), who did much to assure its popularity. Alfons and Aloys Kontarsky, the renowned German duo-pianists, describe the suite as being a succession of individual "genre" pieces, tied together as one might tie a bunch of flowers. *En bateau*, for example, has the quality of a gondolier's song that is at once festive and intimate. The distinguished French musicologist and Debussy biographer, Léon Vallas (1879–1956), noted that there are a few audacities in the chordal writing and in the rhythmic accentuation. There is also an abundance of inspired melodies, evidence of Debussy's rich gift of spontaneous invention.

After the overwhelming success of its first performance in November 1936, Prokofiev's ballet *Romeo and Juliet* was further popularized with three orchestral suites arranged from it by the composer. The first two suites were introduced in Moscow and St. Petersburg (then Leningrad) just one year after the first performance. The third was introduced in Moscow in 1946. The first two suites contain seven excerpts from the ballet, while the third has only six. Each suite projects an independent sequence, relating to Shakespeare's tale. While it is a staple in today's ballet and orchestral repertoire, *Romeo and Juliet* was ground-breaking for Prokofiev, as is explained by writer Malcolm Rayment in his review, *Romeo and Juliet: Ballet Music*: "Prokofiev not only sings of the love of Romeo and Juliet, but also faithfully portrays the growth of this love from adolescent stirrings to maturity. This is something that no composer had succeeded in doing before, although others (notably Berlioz) had matched in their music the beauty of the most tender scenes in Shakespeare's play."

-Program notes by Elmer Booze



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PAUL MELLON

June 11, 1907 – February 1, 1999



*This concert is dedicated to the memory of Paul Mellon,
philanthropist and patron of the arts*