Strauss’ _Four Last Songs_ bathe in an autumnal spirit of sentimentality. Long enamored with music for voice and orchestra, Strauss wrote his first song cycle with orchestra (_Lieder aus letzte Blätter, Op. 10_) at age twenty and returned to this genre for the last time at age eighty-four, a year before his death. For this cycle Strauss chose three poems by the German novelist Hermann Hesse (1877–1962): _Frühling, September, and Beim Schlafengehn_, and one by Joseph von Eichendorff (1788–1857): _Im Abendrot_. About the first three songs, critic Heinz Becker stated: “All the tonal magic of his life’s creative achievements once again came into its own,” and about the fourth, “It [afforded] a crowning conclusion to this cycle [in] song.”

Because of his genuine love of children and their uniquely personal world, Elgar was inspired to compose a series of compositions dealing with this subject matter, one of which was _The Wand of Youth Suite, Op. 1b_. The story is told that Elgar’s teenage children wrote a play depicting a faultless world free of meddlesome adults, who were excluded. Allowed in, however, were the likes of wild bears, moths, butterflies, fairies and giants. Adults were admitted only if they could repent their adult behavior, while at the same time begging for forgiveness, which would have to be on a judgmental basis. The first of the two suites inspired by this story (Op. 1a) was presented to the public in 1907. It was so successful that Elgar immediately composed a second suite and presented it the next year.

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 Café remains open until 6:30 p.m._

_Selection from concerts at the Gallery can be heard on the second Sunday of each month at 9:00 p.m. on WGMS, 103.5 FM._

The Fifty-ninth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art

2362d Concert

NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA

GEORGE MANOS, conductor

ALESSANDRA MARC, soprano, guest artist

Sunday Evening, 19 November 2000
Seven O’clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free
Conductor, composer, and pianist George Manos has been director of music at the National Gallery of Art and conductor of the National Gallery Orchestra since 1985. He is also artistic director of the American Music Festival and the National Gallery vocal and chamber ensembles, which he founded. Manos’ career as a performing pianist and teacher has included several years on the faculty of The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, where he taught piano, conducting, and chamber music. In addition, he held the directorship of the Wilmington, Delaware School of Music, presenting an annual jazz festival and clinic. Maestro Manos founded and directed for ten years the renowned Kilarney Bach Festival in the Republic of Ireland and was the music director of the 1992 Scandinavian Music Festival in Kolding, Denmark.

“Une etoile est née (A Star is Born),” headlined Le Figaro (Paris). The New Yorker proclaimed: “...an instrument of unsurpassed beauty and impact and perhaps the richest, fullest, most beautiful big soprano voice around.” Such accolades have been and continue to be a staple in the career of the outstanding American soprano Alessandra Marc. Frequent guest appearances in the most prestigious opera houses and concert halls throughout the world have brought her into collaboration with the most eminent conductors of our time, including Giuseppe Sinopoli, Daniel Barenboim, Sir George Solti, Zubin Mehta, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Lorin Maazel. Miss Marc’s discography is likewise impressive. Delos Records issued her first aria recital recording, American Diva, and her newest releases include four on the Teldec label: Schoenberg’s Erwartung, Berg’s Altenberg Lieder and Lulu Suite, with Sinopoli and the Dresden Staatskapelle, and the final scene of Richard Strauss’ Salome with the North German Radio Orchestra.

In his Czech Suite, Op. 39, Dvořák set five indigenous Czech folk dances for orchestra. He originally intended to write a triptych from a series of his orchestral serenades, but abandoned the idea and instead wrote five dance pieces to form a suite. The full title Czech Suite was incorporated for the premiere performance, held in 1879 at the Academy of the Association of Czech Journalists at the New Prague Theater and conducted by Adolf Čechs.
# Im Abendrot (von Eichendorff)

Wir sind durch Not und Freude
Gegangen Hand in Hand:
Vom Wandern ruhen wir beide
Nun überm stillen Land.

Rings sich die Täler neigen,
Es dunkelt schon die Luft,
Zwei Lerchen nur noch steigen
Nachtraumend in den Duft.

Tritt her und lass sie schwirren,
Bald ist es Schlaflzeit,
Daß wir uns nicht verirren
In dieser Einsamkeit.

O weiter, stille Friede!
So tief im Abendrot,
Wie sind wir wandermüde –
Ist dies etwa der Tod?

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# In the Glow of the Sunset

Through troubles and joys
we have gone, hand in hand.
Now both of us rest from our
wanderings, high above the
still countryside.

All around us, the valleys
descend; the sky grows dark;
Only two larks, remembering a
dream, rise into the haze.

Come here, and let them fly
(soon it will be time to sleep),
lest we lose our way in this
loneliness.

O, wide, still peace!
So deep in the glow of the sunset;
How weary we are with
wandering–
Can this, then, be death?

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# Frühling (Hesse)

In dämmrigen Grüften
Träumte ich lang
Von deinen Bäumen und blauen
Lüften,
Von deinem Duft und
Vogelgesang.

Nun liegst du erschlossen
In Gleiß und Zier,
Von licht übergossen
Wie ein Wunder vor mir.

Du kennst mich wieder
Du lockest mich zart,
Es zittert durch all meine Glieder
Deine selige Gegenwart!

---

# Spring

In twilit valleys
I have long dreamt
of your trees and
blue skies,
your perfumes and your
bird-song.

Now you lie before me, revealed
in glistening splendor,
flooded with light,
like a miracle.

You know me again;
You lure me gently;
All my limbs tremble
with your blessed presence!
September (Hesse)

Der Garten trauert,
kühl sinkt in die Blumen der Regen.
Der Sommer schauert
still seinem Ende entgegen.

Golden tropft Blatt um Blatt niederr vom hohen Akazienbaum.
Sommer lächelt erstaunt und matt in den sterbenden Gartentraum.

Lange noch bei den rosen bleibt er stehn,
sehnt sich nach Ruh.
Langsam tut er die Müdigewordnen Augen zu.

September

The garden mourns;
The cool rain sinks into the flowers;
The summer shudders silently toward its end.

Leaf after golden leaf drops from the tall acacia.
The summer smiles, astonished and weary, into the garden’s dying dream.

He remains standing among the roses for a long time, yearning for rest.
Slowly he closes his eyes, heavy with fatigue.

Beim Schlafengehen (Hesse)

Nun der Tag mich müd gemacht,
Soll mein sehnlisches Verlangen
Freundlich die gestirnte Nacht
Wie ein müdes Kind empfangen.

Hände, laßt von allem Tun,
Stirn, vergiß du alles Denken,
Alle meine Sinne nun
Wollen sich in Schlummer senken.

Und die Seele unbewacht,
Will in freien Flügen schweben,
Um im Zauberkreis der Nacht
Tief und tausendfach zu leben.

Going to Sleep

Now the day has tired me;
May my passionate longing receive the starry night like a sleepy child.

Hands, leave your doing;
Brain, leave your thinking;
All my senses would now sink into slumber.

And the unwatched soul wants to soar up freely; to live, in the magic circle of the night, a thousand times more intensely.