

The second movement (*Allegretto scherzando*) is a miraculous undertaking for Beethoven, who pays homage to his friend Johannes Nepomuk Maelzel (1772–1838), the inventor of the metronome. The theme, taken from one of his whimsical canons, mimics the ticking of the metronome. Beethoven's clever manipulation of this ticking sound into a musical joke, even to the point of imitating a malfunctioning metronome at the end, produces one of his most vivacious pieces of music.

The third movement (*Tempo di menuetto*), in ABA format, with its interplay of wind instruments (two horns and clarinet) within its trio, is a return on Beethoven's part to an archaic form that had fallen out of fashion. It is one of the factors cited by musicologists who note the indebtedness of this work to eighteenth-century models.

The fourth movement (*Finale: Allegro vivace*) continues the jocund quality ascribed to the symphony as a whole. It is best summed up by the insightful remarks of Josef Krips: "With its Olympian laughter, [the last movement] brings the symphony to an epigrammatic close: it is an inspired finale, absolutely true to the mood of all that has gone before [it]. I have the feeling that these pages represent Beethoven's last cheerful moments, at any rate the last for orchestra, for in the succeeding symphony he plunged directly into the struggle of existence."

Program notes by Elmer Booze

*For the convenience of concertgoers,
the Garden Café remains open until 6:30 p.m.*

*The use of cameras or recording equipment during
the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell
phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.*

The Sixtieth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2417th Concert

NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA

GEORGE MANOS, *conductor*

Sunday Evening, 14 April 2002
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

PROGRAM

Jean Sibelius
(1865–1957) from Karelia Suite, Op. 11
(1893)

Intermezzo
Alla Marcia

Alexander Borodin
(1833–1887) In the Steppes of Central Asia
(1887)

Edvard Grieg
(1843–1907) Lyric Suite, Op. 54
(1904)

Shepherd Boy
Norwegian Rustic March
Nocturne
March of the Dwarfs

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827) Symphony No. 8 in F Major
Op. 93 (1812)

Allegro vivace e con brio
Allegretto scherzando
Tempo di menuetto
Finale: Allegro vivace

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 of 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.

In 1893 students at the University of Viborg in the capital of Karelia, then a part of Finland, scheduled a pageant relating to the history of the region. Karelia had been split between Russia and Finland since the fourteenth century, and in the nineteenth was considered a prime candidate for annexation by the Russians. The pageant was seen as a way to reinforce Finnish national sentiment in the region and safeguard it against "Russianization." Jean Sibelius was commissioned to compose a work for the occasion. The resulting suite of three pieces is a shining example of his gift for composing accessible music with tantalizing and potent melodies. It captures the spirit of the Finnish people as they celebrate their history and culture.

With a tonal palette not unlike that of the pictorial changes within a kaleidoscope, Borodin's *In the Steppes of Central Asia* represents the quintessential musical tonal painting in miniature. Dedicated to Franz Liszt (1811–1886), the work celebrates the twenty-fifth anniversary of the coronation of Czar Alexander II by means of a picturesque musical illustration of a moment from life in the far reaches of the empire. To give authenticity to his efforts, Borodin made use of the laborious in-depth research on the twelfth-century folk melodies of Central Asia that he had undertaken prior to composing his opera *Prince Igor*. A descriptive account of the music by Borodin prefaces his score: "In the

silence of the arid steppes of central Asia is heard the first refrain of a peaceful Russian song. One also hears the melancholy sound of Oriental music [as well as] the approaching steps of horses and camels. A caravan, escorted by Russian soldiers, crosses the immense desert, continuing untroubled on its long way under the protection of the warlike Russian guard. The caravan continues to advance. The Russian songs of the regional people blend [within] the same harmonies. The refrains [continue for] a long time and slowly fade away." Borodin's debt to his colleagues Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Mussorgsky is apparent, but the instrumental texture and harmonic colors expressed in this work set it apart. As the writer R. D. Darrell states: "Certainly empty space, distant horizons, and the loneliness of travelers in a strange land never have been captured more economically, more vividly, or with more [poignancy] than they are here."

The ten sets of *Lyric Pieces* that Edvard Grieg composed for the piano represent an expansion of his developmental years in writing for that instrument. *Set Five (Lyrical Pieces, Op. 54)*, written in 1891, contains six pieces and is considered by many pianists to be Grieg's crowning achievement in the genre. The Austro-Hungarian conductor and Wagner specialist Anton Seidl (1850–1898) also regarded *Op. 54* very highly and orchestrated the first four pieces, substituting *No. 6 (Bell Ringing)* for *No. 1 (Shepherd Boy)*. Grieg, who was not totally displeased with Seidl's efforts, nevertheless found his arrangement too Wagnerian and ponderous. After Seidl's death, with the permission of his wife, the soprano Auguste Kraus, Grieg reorchestrated the pieces with a more Nordic flavor and reinstated *Shepherd Boy* as No. 1. Grieg's ardent involvement in the study and collecting of Norwegian folk songs and dances shines forth in these four pieces, all of which are examples of the rich legacy he unearthed. *Shepherd Boy*, with its bucolic atmosphere, is scored for strings and harp only. It expresses an immediate feeling of tenderness in a melancholy way that is quintessentially Nordic. Scored for full orchestra, *Norwegian Rustic March*, with its divergent rhythms and tonalities, relies heavily on the wind section. *Nocturne* is almost impressionistic in its avian sounds, which are rendered in solos by the

flute and violin, providing an attractive and euphonic orchestration. The final piece, *March of the Dwarfs*, according to writer C. B. Rees: "has its wild and flamboyant theme interpolated by one of those lovely Griegian melodies [to] which only he—with the possible exception of a man like Schubert—had the secret. In essence, it is simple, direct music—beautiful music which best speaks for itself."

Among the many irritating problems surrounding Ludwig van Beethoven while composing his *Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93*, the litigious argument he had with his younger brother, Nikolaus-Johann, kept him in an especially unhappy mood. Nikolaus-Johann's housekeeper and lover, Therese Obermayer, was the sister-in-law of a physician to whom Nikolaus-Johann rented part of his house. Nikolaus-Johann wanted Therese to move in with him before marriage, an idea against which Beethoven fulminated, either on religious or jealous grounds. The younger brother, however, won the argument by marrying Therese without Ludwig's knowledge and against his wishes.

Acting almost as an apotheosis of the soul, the *Eighth Symphony* exhibits a sunny disposition that belies the agony Beethoven suffered while composing it. The celebrated Austrian conductor Josef Krips (1902–1974) remarked, "The *Eighth* is the happiest of the happy symphonies—the others are the *Second*, the *Sixth*, and the *Seventh*. One mood of high good humor follows another throughout its length."

A work of great magnitude, the symphony is sometimes analyzed as a throwback to the eighteenth century. The remarkable first movement (*Allegro vivace e con brio*) boasts of having first and second themes that are structurally proportionate rather than contrasting, as is usual in the sonata-allegro form. The contrast, however, comes in the form of instrumental settings (the first half of the principal theme is played by the entire ensemble, while the second half is given to the wind instruments), and a tempo change is introduced in the second theme. The development consists of two parts: the first has three sections that are sharply delineated, and the second presents devices of melodic transformation, such as augmentation and diminution. Brimming with activity, the entire segment blossoms steadily from a small ensemble texture to a charismatic climax at the entrance of the recapitulation.