

immediate impact but does not completely conceal its sensitive and whimsical aspects.

In the fourth movement (*Allegro energico e passionato*), Brahms made a daring substitute for the usually anticipated sonata-allegro or rondo form: the ancient baroque chaconne. A set of variations over a theme, the chaconne ascended to exalted heights in the compositions of Johann Sebastian Bach. Examples include his *Cantata No. 150*, the *Chaconne in D Minor for Solo Violin*, and the reprise of the *Aria* in the *Goldberg Variations*. The *Ciacona (Chaconne)* movement in Bach's *Cantata No. 150* was purportedly a topic of discussion between Brahms and von Bülow, in which Brahms proposed using a chromatically altered version of the theme in a movement of his symphony. His set of variations for this movement is in triple meter on an eight-measure theme that is boldly presented by the wind instruments in the opening three measures. Thirty variations follow, each likewise eight measures long. The momentum of the movement becomes inexorable, with mood changes that simulate multifaceted gemstones. A solemn passage for the trombones is the climax to this movement. After a brief pause the principal theme returns, and the movement is brought to a close with a brilliant coda, marked *Più allegro*.

Program notes by Elmer Booze

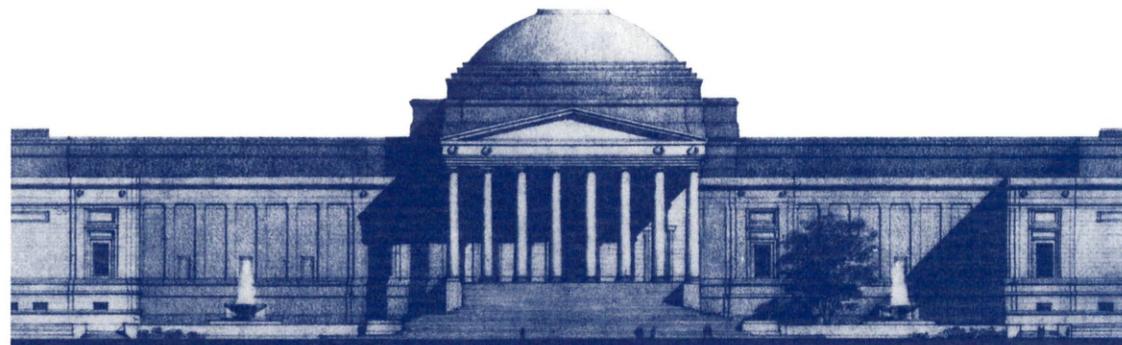
The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that all electronic devices are turned off.

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

The Sixtieth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2423d Concert

NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA

GEORGE MANOS, conductor

Sunday Evening, 2 June 2002
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

PROGRAM

- Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827) Overture to “Coriolan”
Op. 62 (1807)
- Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750) Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor
BWV 582
Transcribed for orchestra by Leopold Stokowski

INTERMISSION

- Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897) Symphony No.4 in E Minor
Op. 98 (1884–1885)
- Allegro non troppo
Andante moderato
Allegro giocoso
Allegro energico e passionato

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.

Beethoven’s *Overture to “Coriolan,” Op. 62*, received its inspiration from the tragedy *Coriolan* by Heinrich Joseph von Collin (1772–1811), a Viennese courtier, poet, and dramatist. The drama centers on the expatriate Roman patrician Coriolanus, who aided the enemies of Rome against his own people and paid for his treachery with his life. Beethoven, who had a friendly relationship with von Collin, agreed to compose an overture for the play. By the time Beethoven had completed his score, however, von Collin’s play had already been introduced in Vienna (on 24 November 1802) with incidental music taken from Mozart’s *Idomeneo*. Although the overture was inspired by and written for von Collin’s play, its performance in a theater was never documented, thus leaving Beethoven’s first musical piece for the stage unexecuted in its original intent. Convinced of the work’s appeal, however, he decided to present it to the public as a concert overture. Beethoven eventually conducted the premiere performance in March 1807 at a subscription concert at the palace of Prince Lobkowitz. At that time the work was still unpublished, and he and the musicians worked from manuscript. Considering the widespread popularity the overture has enjoyed ever since, the composer’s faith in it was indeed justified.

Bach’s *Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor, BWV 582*, is renowned in its original organ version. Having played the work for many years as an organist, the charismatic English-born American conductor Leopold Stokowski (1882–1977) was well-suited to transcribing the *Passacaglia and Fugue* for orchestra. His knowledge of its tonal possibilities and polyphonic intricacies enabled him to “translate the advanced idiom of Bach into modern musical language” (James Lyons). The first half of the eight-bar *basso ostinato* of the *Passacaglia and Fugue* are also found in an earlier work, the *Trio en passacaille* from a mass by the French organist and composer André Raison (1650–1719). Bach expanded this theme and added twenty variations that exploit the entire musical range of the organ, culminating in a brilliant ending for the *passacaglia*. The subject of the ensuing double fugue is the theme of the *passacaglia*. An accompanying eighth-note rhythmic pattern serves as a countersubject.

Stokowski's orchestral version of the *Passacaglia and Fugue* has suffered periods of neglect, as the popularity of orchestral transcriptions of keyboard music has waxed and waned. But, again quoting music critic and writer James Lyons, "It should be emphasized that Mr. Stokowski has nowhere tampered with the spirit of the master. Where Bach was chaste, so is the transcription; where he was vivid, so is the transcription. But in each instance the original quality has been enhanced in the Stokowski arrangement. The triumphant fact is that the orchestra can say what Bach has to imply. All of the tonal glories denied him are here resplendent."

Brahms was fifty-two years of age when he completed his fourth and last symphony. He had begun it almost immediately upon completion of his *Third Symphony* in 1883, and finished it during a stay at Mürzzuschlag, in the Styrian Alps of Austria. When he and the Austrian pianist and composer Ignaz Brüll (1846–1907) played the two-piano version to introduce the work, it was not enthusiastically received. The outspoken German music critic Eduard Hanslick (1825–1904), who was present at the performance, remarked: "Really, you know, it sounds like two tremendously witty people quarrelling." Having received such negative feedback, Brahms was initially apprehensive about the success of his symphony, but he remained optimistic about the eventual success of the orchestral version, which had not yet been heard.

An opportunity to present this version came when German pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow (1830–1894) invited Brahms to rehearse the work with his orchestra in Meiningen. On 25 October 1885 Brahms conducted the world premiere of the *Fourth Symphony*. The outcome was judged "interesting at best" by the Meiningen audience and critics. A month later, however, von Bülow took his orchestra on tour to several German cities and to Holland, performing the work to great acclaim. When Brahms attended a performance of the symphony in Vienna in March 1897, he was boisterously applauded at his seat in the balcony. Prophetically, this was the last of his compositions he was to hear performed. He died a month later.

The opening movement (*Allegro non troppo*) begins with a theme that is uncomplicated, reflective, and sonorous, followed by the stronger theme that formulates the emotional turning points and conquests of the movement. A fanfare by the wind instruments introduces a fervent second theme for the cellos. The development section exudes an exquisite interplay of mental acumen and fervor. Here the range of Brahms' musical exploration covers the gamut of human emotions, from a quiet expression of poignancy in an easily harmonized melody to barbarity in the penetrating perplexities of counterpoint. The musical drama is high, and the recapitulation and coda close the movement in a climax of the first magnitude. Sir Donald Tovey (1875–1940) called it the equal of the best of Beethoven.

The second movement (*Andante moderato*) introduces the key of E major and opens with horn calls using the Phrygian mode (the mode that corresponds to a scale played from E to E on the white keys of the piano). The implication is that a ceremonial event is forthcoming. What follows, however, is a narrative episode that is warm-hearted and lyrical, performed by the clarinets with pizzicato strings. The sonata-allegro form used for this movement has an aberrant feature: its development section is not formalized. Instead, the themes are lavishly diversified, giving the music a beguiling air of mystery in the manner of instrumental and harmonic tone paintings. The cellos are highlighted during the playing of the charismatic second subject over the accompaniment of strings. The attractive clarinet writing "may reasonably [be attributed to] the influence of Richard Mühlfeld, the Meiningen clarinetist, whose playing inspired Brahms to [compose such] lovely [clarinet] music in his later years" (Peter Latham).

The third movement (*Allegro giocoso*), in spite of its duple meter and sonata-allegro form, is a quasi-scherzo, the first and only one to find its way into a Brahms symphony. Both Brahms and Tchaikovsky eschewed the scherzo form that is the hallmark of the classical symphony without indicating their reasons for doing so. The movement is nevertheless intrepid, vigorous, and dramatic. A shade of melancholy is audible within its meteoric drive, with the result that the music makes an