

haunting rhythms of the *habanera*. It should surprise no one to learn that Manuel de Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* is directly descended from it. Falla relates that he never forgot his first meeting with Debussy in 1907 and learned much from a study of his Spanish music.

All three pieces from Schumann's *Phantasiestücke* were inspired by aspects of the night. They come from the pen of the youthful, life-embracing Schumann, for whom the night was still a mystery. Later it would become a terror, as the dark side of his personality gained the upper hand. He would eventually be "tormented by demons," in his own words, as he sank into mental collapse after a failed attempt at suicide.

After such somber thoughts, it is a relief to turn to two pieces that offer a more festive view of the night. Felix Mendelssohn was only sixteen years old when he composed the incidental music to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Rachmaninoff's celebrated piano transcription of the *Scherzo* has long since entered the pantheon of great music. Its finger-twisting difficulties have brought about the downfall of many a virtuoso, and Rachmaninoff's own recorded performance is a constant reminder of what faces the pianist who would play this work. Few are the heroes of the keyboard who can confront the technical hurdles of this piece with equanimity.

Alfred Grünfeld's *Soirée de Vienne*, as its title implies, is an evocation of imperial Vienna, with its marble ballrooms, chandeliers, and dancers swirling to the music of Johann Strauss. Grünfeld was a Hungarian pianist and composer of operettas and sophisticated salon music. He appears to have been the first pianist of note to have made recordings (during the period between 1899 and 1914), and his reputation was secured by his tours in Europe and the United States. He was renowned for his exquisite tonal control, which suggested comparisons with the great Ukrainian virtuoso pianist, Vladimir de Pachman (1848–1933). Josef Hofmann, one of the great American pianists of the first third of the twentieth century, remarked that Grünfeld "had a velvety touch, but he only played salon music really well." His brilliant concert paraphrases are all but forgotten today, but they may be compared to those of Liszt and Godowsky in their technical polish and dazzling insouciance.

*The Sixty-first Season of*

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and  
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

**National Gallery of Art**



*2455th Concert*

**VALERIE TRYON, *pianist***

Presented in honor of the exhibition  
*Frederic Remington: The Color of Night*

Sunday Evening, 13 April 2003  
Seven O'clock  
West Building, West Garden Court

*Admission free*

*Program*

Frédéric Chopin  
(1810–1849) Two Nocturnes  
Op. 9 (1830)  
No. 1 in B-flat Minor  
No. 2 in E-flat Major

Franz Liszt  
(1811–1886) Harmonies du soir  
No. 11 from “Etudes d’exécution transcendante”  
(1851)

Enrique Granados  
(1867–1916) The Lover and the Nightingale  
from “Goyescas” (1911)

Claude Debussy  
(1862–1918) La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune  
from “Préludes,” Book II (c. 1910)

La soirée dans Grenade  
from “Estampes” (1903)

*Intermission*

Robert Schumann  
(1810–1856) Three Phantasiestücke  
Op. 12 (1837)  
No. 1: Des Abends (In the Evening)  
No. 5: In der Nacht (At Night)  
No. 7: Traumes Wirren (Troubled Dreams)

Francis Poulenc  
(1899–1963) Three Nocturnes  
(1929–1934)  
No. 1 in C Major  
No. 2 in A Major (Bal des jeunes filles)  
No. 3 in F Major (Bal fantôme)

Felix Mendelssohn  
(1809–1847) Scherzo from “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”  
Arranged for piano solo by Sergey Rachmaninoff

Alfred Grünfeld  
Soirée de Vienne

*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.*

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

*The Musician*

**Valerie Tryon’s** career as a concert pianist began while she was still a child. By the age of twelve, she had broadcast for the BBC and was appearing regularly before the public on the concert platform. She was one of the youngest students ever admitted to the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she received the highest award in piano playing and a stipend that made it possible for her to study in Paris with Jacques Février. Her place among Britain’s acknowledged artists was assured when a Cheltenham Festival recital brought her the enthusiastic acclaim of the country’s foremost critics. Her extensive repertoire ranges from Bach to contemporary composers and includes more than sixty concertos and a vast range of chamber music. She is well known for her sensitive interpretations of the romantics, in particular Chopin, Liszt, and Rachmaninoff. She has played in Toronto, Boston, Washington, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, and Los Angeles as well as in most of the major concert halls in Britain. Among British composers, both Alun Hoddinott and John McCabe have dedicated works to her. Valerie Tryon is the artist-in-residence of McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

### *Program Notes*

Across the ages the night has inspired painters, poets, playwrights, and, above all, musicians to produce some of their best work. The repertory of night music is far larger than one might suppose. Bartók, Ravel, Beethoven, Chopin, Debussy, Liszt, Scriabin, and Schumann have composed music connected with the night, some of it dreamlike, some expressing terror. There is music about the void, moonlight, twilight, the stars, and sleep, about dreams and nightmares, ghosts, goblins, and nightingales. Both painters and composers have used the title *Nocturne* for works inspired by the night. Some of them have focused exclusively on its peaceful and restful aspects. Others, like Chopin and Frederic Remington, confronted such aspects as danger, death, and psychological disturbance. In their overall effect, these works allow the viewer or listener a controlled environment in which to experience nocturnal emotions, both positive and negative, and rid the darkness of some of its uncertainties.

The first composer to make use of the term nocturne and establish it as a genre was John Field (1782–1837), who bestowed this novel title on eighteen of his piano pieces. His method was to unfold a cantabile melody in the right hand, while drawing harmonies from across two or more octaves of the lower half of the keyboard, releasing all the upper partials through the sustaining pedal and bathing the instrument in a warm glow. His approach to piano texture captured the attention of Chopin, whose nocturnes placed the genre on a higher footing. The melodies in Chopin's nocturnes are subjected to constant variation, and with each return they are called upon to bear the weight of ever more complex ornamentation. Some of these pieces are miniature masterworks that will continue to grace the concert hall as long as the piano recital itself survives. The two Chopin nocturnes in tonight's program date from 1830 and are among the first he composed. Chopin's nocturnes in turn inspired other composers as diverse as Scriabin, Fauré, and Poulenc.

Liszt's *Transcendental Study No. 11 in D-flat Major*, is subtitled *Harmonies du soir (Evening Harmonies)*. Liszt purportedly liked to compose and play the piano with an image in his mind's eye. In his memoir, Liszt's pupil Arthur Friedheim tells of an occasion when he had a lesson at Liszt's villa in Tivoli. Friedheim played *Harmonies du soir* but could not grasp the mood, and Liszt beckoned the young man to the window. It was early evening at sunset and golden rays were already casting velvet shadows across the Italian *campagna*. "There are your evening harmonies," Friedheim recalls Liszt declaring. "Play that."

With his *Goyescas*, two volumes of pieces named after scenes by Goya, the Spanish composer Enrique Granados brought modern Spanish music into the world. The most famous of these pieces is entitled *El amor y la muerte (Love and Death)*. It is universally known in English-speaking countries by the mistranslated title, *The Lover and the Nightingale*. Granados' untimely death at age forty-nine was a great loss to Spanish music. He was returning to Spain in 1916 after having attending the New York premiere of his opera, *Goyescas*, and having played at a White House reception given by President Woodrow Wilson. The ship on which Granados and his wife were passengers was torpedoed by a German submarine, and the couple drowned.

Even during his lifetime Claude Debussy was widely acknowledged as the inventor of a new kind of pianism. From both the fingers and the feet of his interpreters he demands many nuances hitherto unexploited. His use of color and imagery in sound are unrivaled, and he expects of the pianist an absolute mastery over the most subtle shades of sound. Pianists and musicologists talk of atmosphere in the music of Debussy and it is to him that we owe this ephemeral concept. *La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune*, from the second book of Debussy *Préludes*, is among the best examples of atmospheric music. Within its widely spaced textures are distance, space, and light, evocative of a new aesthetic in which tonality itself seems to be on the verge of liquidation.

*La soirée dans Grenade* is one of several Debussy pieces that are conspicuously successful in evoking Spain and its music, even though the composer never set foot on the Iberian Peninsula. Running through this composition are *ostinato* effects, the sound of distant guitars, and the