

Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92*, was given its premiere on 8 December 1813 in the hall of the University of Vienna with the composer on the podium. The work was played at a time of profoundly felt tragedy. The performance was to benefit the wounded heroes of Bavaria and Austria who had fought against Napoleon in the uprising at Hanau in 1813. In addition, Beethoven was already suffering from the unrelenting advancement of deafness that allowed him to hear only the loud passages he had written.

The four movements are strikingly rich in rhythmic diversity, allowing the work to be enjoyed without programmatic references. Beethoven's orchestration is scintillating throughout the work, and by itself is considered one of his rare accomplishments. The opening movement (*Poco sostenuto; vivace*) begins with a slow, protracted introduction that gives way to an exploding main theme of unrestrained vitality. The second movement (*Allegretto*) is the epicenter of this symphony. It encloses a restful and soulful procession of such magnitude that during the symphony's first and second performances the frenetic enthusiasm of the audience demanded a repeat performance. Writer Pitts Sanborn believes the movement to be "the most remarkable pages in all [of] Beethoven." He continues: "The movement has been likened to a procession in the catacombs. But it has been likened as well to the love dream of an odalisque [a female slave in a harem]." The third movement (*Presto; assai meno presto*) is a *scherzo* with a contrasting trio section. Its theme (twice repeated) is believed to be an extraction from an Austrian hymn of pilgrimage. The finale (*Allegro con brio*) is filled with exultation and effervescence and is unique, even for Beethoven. Writer Steven Ledbetter joins the ranks of those who consider this Beethoven's finest finale when he says: "The finale...belongs to this special *Seventh-Symphony* world, a world that links particular keys, rhythmic energy, and orchestral sonority with...musical drama and logic that are characteristic of Beethoven at his best."

Programs notes by Elmer Booze

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 Sixty-second Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2466th Concert

NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA

GEORGE MANOS, conductor

Presented in honor of the 25th anniversary of the East Building
of the National Gallery of Art

Sunday Evening, 5 October 2003
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)	Symphony No. 25 in G Minor K. 183 (1773)
	Allegro con brio Andante Menuetto and Trio Allegro
Emmanuel Charbrier (1841–1894)	Suite pastorale (1888)
	Idylle Danse villageoise Sous bois Scherzo valse

Intermission

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)	Symphony No. 7 in A Major Op. 92 (1811–1812)
	Poco sostenuto; vivace Allegretto Presto; assai meno presto Allegro con brio

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 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.

Program Notes

Written after his short stay in Vienna in the winter of 1773–1774, Mozart's *Symphony No. 25 in G Minor, K. 183*, introduced the element of a minor key for the first time among his symphonies, a radical departure for him. He did not use a minor key again until creating his penultimate symphony, *No. 40 in G Minor, K. 550* (1788). G minor was linked by musical tradition with passion, and *K. 183* is a decidedly passionate work. Possessing great depth and fervor, it externalizes the kaleidoscopic emotional range of a sensitive and precocious youth who had not yet reached his eighteenth birthday.

A brilliantly written work, *K. 183* was created neither on commission nor to commemorate a special event—it is a musical essay of a personal nature. It appears to be a reflection of Mozart's reaction to the *Sturm und Drang* period that engulfed the European music and art world in his time. The American musicologist Alfred Einstein (1880–1952) expressed the opinion of many musicologists when he stated that this intrusion of a passionate personal expression into Mozart's symphonic works reflected suffering emanating “from the depths of Mozart's soul.”

Emmanuel Chabrier began his professional life as a civil servant but turned to music as his full-time occupation in the late 1870s. The *Dix pièces pittoresques* were the first works he released for publication, and they earned him immediate recognition as a composer. Commenting on some of the pieces as he heard them in concert, César Franck (1822–1890) remarked: “We have just heard something quite out of the ordinary. This music is a bridge between our own times and those of [François] Couperin and [Jean-Philippe] Rameau.” A contemporary English critic, Brice Morrison, maintained that Chabrier's pieces were “zigzagging recklessly between Schumann and Offenbach, yet maintaining a peculiar individuality [with] their melodic directness and pungent rhythms [that] are wonderfully fresh and immediate.”