

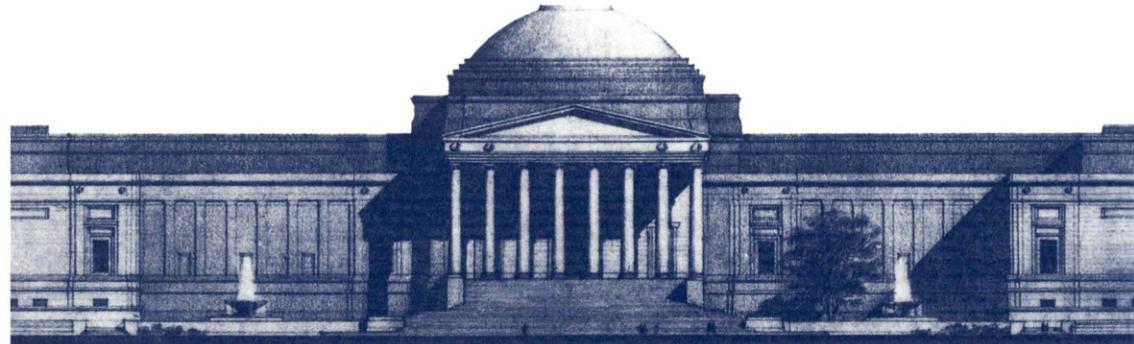
The Sixty-second Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art

*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.*



2481st Concert

JENNIFER AYLNER, *soprano*
KENNETH MERRILL, *pianist*

Presented in honor of the exhibition
Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg, 1783–1853

Sunday Evening, 18 January 2004
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Christoph Ernst Friedrich Weyse
(1774–1842)

Skøn jomfru
Theklas sang

Peter Heise
(1830–1879)

Skovensomhed

P. E. Lange-Müller
(1850–1926)

Åkande

Carl Nielsen
(1865–1931)

Æbleblomst
Irmelin Rose
Erindringens sø
Sommersang

Edvard Grieg
(1843–1907)

Faraarsregen
(Text by Holger Drachmann)
To brune øjne
Jeg elsker Dig
(Texts by Hans Christian Andersen)

Intermission

Seascapes

Gaetano Donizetti
(1797–1848)

Oh, vieni al mare

Giacomo Puccini
(1858–1924)

Terra e mare

Giacomo Rossini
(1792–1868)

La Gita in gondola

Landscapes

Gabriel Fauré
(1845–1924)

Clair de lune
La lune blanche
Done, ce serva par un clair d'été
L'hiver a cessé

Portraits

Benjamin Britten
(1913–1976)

Sweet Polly Oliver
The Last Rose of Summer
Oliver Cromwell

The Musicians

Following **Jennifer Aylmer's** October 2002 Weill Recital Hall appearance in the New York Festival of Song, the *New York Times* exclaimed: "Ms. Aylmer's name has been getting around recently, and deservedly so; hearing her live was one of the great pleasures of the evening. She has a healthy, strong voice; her sound is not manufactured, but clear and her own." Richard Houdek of the *Berkshire Eagle* wrote: "Jennifer Aylmer headed the excellent cast in her Berkshire Opera debut as the Governess. Aylmer's nimble, multifaceted soprano has served her well in the newest works of contemporary composers. In her turn as the Governess, she displayed a vast range of telling vocal color from bell-pure pianissimos to robust, dark-edged fortes on her journey from innocence to madness."

The 2003–2004 season for this multitalented singer includes her first Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* with the New York City Opera and Tytania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as she debuts with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. Orchestral engagements include a debut with the Cincinnati Symphony in Mahler's *Symphony No. 4*, conducted by Paavo Järvi, and Lukas Foss' *Time Cycle* with the Brooklyn Philharmonic. Aylmer's recital appearances include concerts at the Wolf Trap Center for the Performing Arts, the New York Festival of Song, and a program of Catalan music at Weill Hall in New York and again in the Terrace

Theater at the Kennedy Center. In addition, she will perform a program of music of Richard Rodgers and Vernon Duke at the Library of Congress. Continuing her association with the Marilyn Horne Foundation, Aylmer appears in recital and residency at the University of Buffalo.

Jennifer Alymer received a career grant from the William Matheus Sullivan Foundation, the Richard F. Gold Career Grant, an encouragement award from Opera Index, and membership in the National Society of Arts and Letters. In 1996 she received the Catherine Filene Shouse Career Grant from the Wolf Trap Opera Company as well as several opera fellowship awards at the Aspen Music Festival. A native of Long Island, New York, Aylmer received her bachelor's degree and performer's certificate from the Eastman School of Music. She appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Colbert Artists Management of New York City.

Pianist **Kenneth Merrill** has appeared in concert with many vocal artists, including Gerard Souzay, Anna Moffo, Robert Merrill, James King, Neil Rosenshein, John Aler, Anthony Dean Griffey, Randal Scarlata, Charlotte Hellekant, Faith Esham, Jennifer Aylmer, and Jeanette Thompson. As a conductor of opera, he has led productions of John Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, Britten's *The Burning Fiery Furnace*, *The Beggar's Opera*, and *Albert Herring*, Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Mozart's *The Impresario* and *Die Zauberflöte*, and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, among others. In association with the Houston Grand Opera, he was head of musical preparation for Rossini's *La Cenerentola* with Cecilia Bartoli in the title role. He also played continuo in that performance, which was subsequently released on the London CD label as well as on video. Kenneth Merrill is a faculty member of the Juilliard School Vocal Arts Department, the Manhattan School of Music, where he teaches song repertoire and accompanying, and the Aspen Music Festival, where he is head coach for the Aspen Opera Theater Center.

Program Notes

While Hans Christian Andersen (1805–1875) and Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) are the most famous names in Danish culture in the early nineteenth century, the period is also known as the “Golden Age” of Danish painting. The Danish artists and composers who flourished during that period are not widely recognized outside that country, but their works are loved and respected by those who are familiar with them. Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg (1783–1853), whose paintings are the focus of a current exhibition at the National Gallery, is considered the father of the “Golden Age” of Danish painting. He was not only a master portrait and landscape artist but also a professor at the Copenhagen Academy, and as such a primary influence in Denmark at a time of intense artistic activity. One of his most noted portraits is that of the Danish sculptor and musician Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770–1844), whose circle of admirers included Felix Mendelssohn, Gaitano Donizetti, and Gioacchino Rossini. No notable compositions by Thorvaldsen survive, but three of his contemporaries, Christoph Ernst Friedrich Weyse (1774–1842), Friedrich Kuhlau (1786–1832), and Johann Peter Emilius Hartmann (1805–1900), wrote songs and operas on texts by Hans Christian Andersen and contributed worthy cantatas, concertos, chamber music, and piano sonatas to the repertoire of works in classical style. The exhibition *Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg, 1783–1853*, was organized by the National Gallery of Art in collaboration with the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, and the Royal Danish Embassy, Washington. It remains on view until 29 February 2004.

Program notes by Elmer Booze