



The Sixty-second Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art

Sixty-first American Music Festival

2, 9, 16, and 23 May 2004

Sunday Evenings, 7:00 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

Mailing address

2000B South Club Drive
Landover, MD 20785

www.nga.gov

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is made possible in part by a generous gift from
the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation.*

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 pm.

2,495th Concert
2 May 2004, 7:00 pm

Mark O'Connor, *violinist, fiddler, composer*
Carol Cook, *viola, violin*
Natalie Haas, *cello*

Pre-concert talk, 6:15 pm

National Public Radio music director
Benjamin Roe and a member of the ensemble
will discuss the music of Mark O'Connor.

*Program subject to change; Mark O'Connor will
announce and comment on the music from the stage.*

Mark O'Connor (b. 1963)

Old Country Fairy Tale (1993)
Chief Sitting in the Rain/College Hornpipe (1995)
Poem for Carlita (1999)
Caprice for Three (1997)
Appalachia Waltz (1993)
Blackberry Mull (2003)

Intermission

F. C.'s Jig (1996)
Brave Wolf (1997)
Limerock (1989)
Vistas (1999)
Olympic Reel (1996)

The Musicians

MARK O'CONNOR

Violinist, composer, and fiddler Mark O'Connor is widely recognized as one of the most gifted contemporary composers in America and surely one of the brightest talents of his generation. An excerpt from a recent feature in the *New York Times* eloquently describes his effect on his audiences: "The audience was on its feet....They were moved by Mr. O'Connor's journey without maps, cheering for the only musician today who can reach so deeply first into the refined, then the vernacular, giving his listeners a complex, sophisticated piece of early twenty-first-century classical music and then knocking them dead with the brown-dirt whine of a Texas fiddle."

A product of America's rich aural folk tradition, O'Connor's journey began at the feet of two violin masters: Texas fiddler Benny Thomasson and French jazz violinist Stephane Grappelli. Finding a place between their marvelous musical extremes, O'Connor absorbed knowledge and influence from a multitude of musical styles and genres. Now, at age forty-one, he has melded and shaped these influences into a new American classical music. Among the many famous musicians who have sought collaboration with O'Connor are Yo-Yo Ma, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, John Williams, Wynton Marsalis, double bassist Edgar Meyer, and the Oscar-winning composer Tan Dun. In cooperation with these and many other musicians, O'Connor has produced a rich and varied discography on the Sony Classical and OMAC Records labels. His *Appalachian Journey* won a Grammy award in 2001.

One of O'Connor's earliest commissions came in 1998 from the McKim Fund of the Library of Congress, resulting in a sonata for violin and piano. With more than 150 performances since it was written, O'Connor's *Fiddle Concerto No. 1* has become the most frequently performed violin concerto by a contemporary composer. His *The American Seasons: Seasons of an American*

Life was commissioned to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of Troy Savings Bank Music Hall in Troy, New York. The work was featured in a twenty-eight-city tour with O'Connor as soloist with the Metamorphosen Chamber Orchestra. It was broadcast nationally on New Year's Day 2002 in a PBS program in which it was paired with Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. O'Connor's *Concerto No. 2* for violin and orchestra was commissioned by the Academy of Saint Martin in the Fields and received its premiere performance at the BBC Proms concert in 2003. Mark O'Connor has earned a reputation as a generous donor of his time to schools of music and to organizations that promote music education and outreach. He is the founder of the Mark O'Connor Fiddle Camp in Nashville, Tennessee, and the Mark O'Connor String Conference near San Diego, California, where he resides with his wife and two children. Mark O'Connor and the Appalachia Waltz Trio appear at the National Gallery by arrangement with Columbia Artists Management, LLC, of New York City.

CAROL COOK

Violist Carol Cook comes from Scotland, where she studied at Saint Mary's Music School in Edinburgh and performed as soloist with the Edinburgh and Guildhall Symphony Orchestras, the Cambridge Sinfonia, and the Edinburgh Players. She has also played with the New York Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and the Metamorphosen Chamber Orchestra. She holds the artist diploma from the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music in Oberlin, Ohio, and the master of music degree from the Juilliard School in New York City.

NATALIE HAAS

Cellist Natalie Haas, age nineteen, has performed in festivals and concerts in Scotland, France, and the United States for the last three years and has been a touring member of the San Francisco Scottish Fiddlers Orchestra for five years. She is currently studying at the Juilliard School with Fred Sherry. A California native, she performs with her sister Brittany in a fiddle-cello duo, as well as with the piano quintet Polaris, the Juilliard Symphony, and pianist Susie Petrov. She teaches privately and at the Mark O'Connor Fiddle Camp and Strings Conference.

2,496th Concert

9 May 2004, 7:00 pm

Ann Schein, pianist

Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

Piano Variations (1930)

Richard Danielpour (b. 1956)

The Enchanted Garden from Preludes, Book I (1992)

Promenade

Mardi Gras

Childhood Memory

From the Underground

Night

Sydney Hodkinson (b. 1934)

Minor Incidents: Four Character Pieces for Solo Piano (1981)

Con energia e audace

Con leggerezza

Con duolo

Con violenza

Intermission

Elliot Carter (b. 1908)

Piano Sonata (1945–1946)

Maestoso—Legato scorrevole

Andante—Misterioso—Andante

The Musician

ANN SCHEIN

Thrilling audiences since her sensational first recordings for the Kapp label and the highly acclaimed Carnegie Hall debut that launched her career, pianist Ann Schein has received critical praise of the highest order in major American and European music centers. She has performed in more than fifty countries and collaborated with such renowned conductors as George Szell, James Levine, Seiji Ozawa, James de Priest, David Zinman, Stanislaw Skrowacewski, and Sir Colin Davis. In 1980, in an inspiring artistic triumph, Schein extended the legacy of her teachers, Mieczyslaw Munz, Arthur Rubinstein, and Dame Myra Hess, by presenting the complete major Chopin repertoire in Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall in the course of one season. Schein's recent performances have included concerts at the 92nd Street Y in New York City and a reading of Beethoven's *Fourth Piano Concerto* with the Concert Artists of Baltimore, conducted by Edward Polochick.

Ann Schein has also left an impression on the concertgoing public through her many tours of the United States and Brazil with soprano Jessye Norman. Their musical collaboration can be heard on a release from Sony Classical in early songs of Alban Berg. Schein's recording of solo piano works of Schumann was released in 2001 on the Ivory Classics label and drew acclaim from reviewers in the United States, Europe, and the Far East.

From 1980 to 2000, Ann Schein was on the faculty of the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore. She gives lectures and master classes across the United States and frequently serves as an adjudicator in major music competitions.

Program Notes

Aaron Copland's *Piano Variations* is a masterpiece of twentieth-century piano writing and a work of enormous importance in the realm of American piano music. The format consists of a theme of ten measures' length that is followed by twenty variations and a coda. The texture of the work is acerbic, rigid, and thrifty, but the work rises to energetic climaxes—a clear example of Copland's genius. "An austere method of musical constructivism" is Nicolas Slonimsky's judicious description of this twentieth-century gem (*Music since 1900*). Copland completed the variations in 1930 and played the premiere performance on 4 January 1931 at a concert given by the League of Composers in New York City. The critic who reviewed the performance in the *New York Herald Tribune* wrote: "Mr. Copland, always a composer of radical tendencies, has in these variations sardonically thumbed his nose at all of those esthetic attributes which have hitherto been considered essential to the creation of music." In his book, *The Anatomy of Musical Criticism*, music historian Alan Walker includes Copland as an example when he makes the following statement about the creative process: "A master unconsciously harnesses musical principles in the service of his genius. They are the 'hidden persuaders' which prompt us to recognize him."

Richard Danielpour, a faculty member of the Manhattan School of Music since 1993, has established himself as one of the most gifted and sought-after composers of his generation. In a conversation with music publisher Mary Lou Humphrey, Danielpour stated: "My music combines the traditions of European classical music [and] the American vernacular of the early twentieth century. Frequently my music evokes sounds of nature, and has the sense of developmental narrative; I like to develop ideas in ways that suggest some kind of drama." About *The Enchanted Garden*, Danielpour says: "This set of preludes for solo piano was inspired by my

dream life: the juxtaposition of and contrast between my experience of subconscious dreams and conscious reality. In a sense, this work is 'a garden of the mind.' The first movement, *Promenade*, was inspired by my daily practice of walking through Central Park before or after working hours.

Mardi Gras, the second movement, resulted from a dream I had of the Berlin Philharmonic and its late music director dancing and marching, instruments in hand, down the streets of the French Quarter in New Orleans (or was it the West Village in New York?). The third movement, *Childhood Memory*, includes [the work's] most vivid musical description of waking from a dream. Here I recall a childhood dream in which I discovered nature as nurturer. At the sound of six chimes (depicting six a.m.), the dream ends; an evocation of birdsong serves as the coda to this song without words.

From the Underground, the fourth movement, remembers a nightmare from my childhood of imaginary gremlin-like creatures skittering and slithering under the ground in New York. The fifth and last movement, *Night*, pays homage to both the consoling and frightening aspects of things nocturnal. A chant of bells (transcribed from those which sound at sunrise and sunset each day in the northern Italian town of Bellagio) is heard in the piano's upper registers during the work's final minutes. Thus the beginning and the end of the day are perceived as one." The Louisiana School of Music commissioned *The Enchanted Garden* for its annual piano festival in Natchitoches, Louisiana.

Sydney Hodkinson's *Minor Incidents: Four Character Pieces for Solo Piano* contains short and relatively light pieces of contrasting character written for the advanced player. A brief fragment from Chopin's *Mazurka, Op 17, No. 4*, serves as the genesis for the entire composition, and each of the four studies is, in effect, a variation on this material. Hodkinson resides in Ormond Beach, Florida, and has been recently appointed to the Artistic Policy Committee of the Daytona Beach Symphony Society. He teaches composition and conducts the Contemporary Ensemble at the Aspen, Colorado, Music Festival and School.

Elliott Carter's *Sonata for Piano* (1945–1946) has elicited divergent criticism, as have most of his works, but it has taken its place as a masterpiece of twentieth-century music and earned lasting enthusiasm on the part of connoisseurs of his music. Ann Schein has performed this work often and has come to know and relish the challenges it offers. Notes from a recorded version of this work by the American pianist and teacher Beveridge Webster (1908–1999) include Carter's own statement about how his magnum opus came into being: "The composition uses many of the resources and sonorities of the modern piano and is thought of as being completely idiomatic for that instrument, with no attempt to use the virtuoso style of the piano writing in a personal way to express my own thoughts and feelings." Time signatures, together with rhythmic experimentation, are the means by which Carter was able to create a new musical idiom that was unique to the music of the Western world. He attempted to free himself from traditional forms by deriving his basic motives from the interrelations between the tone colors and playing techniques of the piano itself. The octaves, fifths, fourths, and thirds that predominate come from the characteristic overtone resonances of the piano. Among living composers, Elliott Carter has certainly attained a place of honor and makes every list of the foremost American composers of the twentieth century.

Program notes by Elmer Booze

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2,497th Concert

16 May 2004, 7:00 pm

The Colorado String Quartet

Julie Rosen, *violin*

Deborah Redding, *violin*

Marka Gustavsson, *viola*

Diane Chaplin, *cello*

Elliot Carter (b. 1908)

Elegy (arranged for String Quartet) (1946)

Robert Maggio (b. 1964)

Songbook for Annamaria (String Quartet No. 1) (2001)

1. "We're Bound Away..."
2. "When You Wake..."
3. "Jimmy Crack Corn..."
4. "All the Live-Long Day"

Intermission

Joan Tower (b. 1938)

Quartet No. 2 ("In Memory") (2001)

(*In one movement*)

Charles Ives (1874–1954)

String Quartet No. 2 (1911–1913)

- Discussions (Andante moderato—
Andante con spirito—Adagio molto)
Arguments (Allegro con spirito)
The Call of the Mountains
(Adagio—Andante—Adagio)

The Musicians

COLORADO STRING QUARTET

In one ten-day period in 1983, the Colorado String Quartet made history by winning two of the music world's highest honors: the Naumburg Chamber Music Award and the first prize at the Banff International String Quartet Competition. Since then the Colorado String Quartet has earned praise on four continents as one of the finest quartets of our time. From the rave reviews in major American media come comments such as these: "The Colorado Quartet presented a spectacularly accomplished performance... tight, flawlessly balanced ensemble" (*Los Angeles Times*); "The quartet played with a brio and resonant, impassioned sound that was extraordinary" (*Chicago Sun-Times*); and "This is a first-class ensemble that rises with panache to meet every challenge in the music" (*Washington Post*). The Colorado Quartet has premiered compositions by established composers, such as Ezra Laderman and Karel Husa, as well as composers of the younger generation. It has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Lila Wallace/Reader's Digest Fund, and the Aaron Copland Fund for music. The Colorado Quartet is currently quartet-in-residence at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, and appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Arts Management Group, Inc., of New York City.

JULIE ROSENFELD

Violinist Julie Rosenfeld, a native of Los Angeles, received her training at the Curtis Institute, the University of Southern California, and Yale University. Her teachers included Szymon Goldberg, Nathan Milstein, and Yukiko Kamei. A member of the Colorado String Quartet since 1982, Rosenfeld often performs with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and at the Santa Fe and La Jolla Music Festivals. In 1992 she became the first woman judge at the Banff International String Quartet competition, and in 1996 she was artist-in-residence at both the Marlboro Music Festival and the International Mozart Festival in Poland.

DEBORAH REDDING

A native of New York City, violinist Deborah Redding grew up in Colorado and founded the Colorado String Quartet while attending the University of Colorado at Boulder. She holds a bachelor of music degree from that institution, where her principal instructor was Oswald Lehnert, and a master of music degree from The Juilliard School of Music, where her principal instructor was Szymon Goldberg. A committed marathon runner, Redding raises scholarship money for the Soundfest Institute of String Quartets through her participation in marathons.

MARKA GUSTAVSSON

Violist Marka Gustavsson holds degrees from Indiana University and the Mannes College of Music and is a doctoral candidate at the City University of New York. She has studied with Mimi Zweig, Joseph Gingold, Felix Galimir, and Daniel Phillips. She has performed in many chamber music events, including the Festival Presence at Radio-France and the Pundaquit Festival in the Philippines. Gustavsson has served on the faculties of Hofstra University and the Kinhaven Music Festival.

DIANE CHAPLIN

A native of Los Angeles, cellist Diane Chaplin holds a bachelor of fine arts degree from the California Institute of the Arts, where she was a student of Cesare Pascarella, and a master of music degree from the Juilliard School of Music, where she studied with Harvey Shapiro. A member of the Colorado String Quartet since 1988, Chaplin has concertized throughout the United States and Europe. She has a large class of private students and is administrative director of the Soundfest Chamber Music Festival and Institute of String Quartets.

Program Notes

Elliot Carter's *Elegy* began its existence as a work for viola or cello and piano in 1943. The composer arranged it for string quartet in 1946, transcribed it for string orchestra in 1952, and revised it once again in 1961. Carter disowned much of the music he composed before the 1940s, but by the time he wrote *Elegy*, he was already in his forties and well beyond his early experimental period. *Elegy* represents both inspired neoclassicism and overt Americanism, a combination exhibited by many artists and composers as they responded to the social and political crises of the Second World War. *Elegy* is perhaps Carter's closest realization of the teachings of Nadia Boulanger (1887–1979). Its continuous arch of melody is set in a restrained contrapuntal context. It has become fashionable to comb Carter's earlier music for hints of his mature style, but *Elegy* is more remarkable for the ways in which it differs from his later compositions.

Robert Maggio's *Songbook for Annamaria* was commissioned by the Colorado String Quartet in 2001 and is among a number of recent commissions from such sources as the ASCAP Foundation, the American Composers Forum, the Barlow Foundation, the Pennsylvania Ballet, and the Lesbian and Gay Chorus of Washington, D.C., in collaboration with D.C.'s Different Drummers. Maggio is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Pew Fellowship in the Arts, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters' Goddard Lieberman Fellowship. Critics have remarked that Maggio's music gives an overall impression of freshness and exuberance, conveying a joy in making music that carries through to the listener.

Joan Tower's *String Quartet No. 2 ("In Memory")* was written in 2001 and was commissioned by the Tokyo String Quartet. The thirteen-minute, one-movement piece is about death and loss. It was written in memory of one of the composer's longtime friends, Margaret Shafer, who passed

away the summer the piece was begun. About two months later, the tragedy of 11 September 2001 occurred, expanding the composer's specific loss to include all those who lost their lives on that day.

This amplified feeling of pain in the world played a major role in increasing the intensity of the music. It contains high, sustained, ethereal passages, some of which culminate in a slow descent. This is paired with more forceful and driving repetitive musical ideas that try to express the anger resulting from the loss of loved ones. Tower said at the time she was composing this work that she was "honored to be writing this piece now for the Tokyo Quartet. I love the string quartet medium; it is one of the most creative in the music world, and I very much look forward to working with such a high level group." The work received its premiere performance in February 2002 in New York City.

In the long list of Charles Ives' works for small ensembles, only two are for the conventional string-quartet instrumentation, yet nothing about these pieces is conventional. *Quartet No. 1*, completed in 1896 when Ives was still an undergraduate at Yale, may have been improvised at the organ. The quartet contains so many references to popular hymns that Ives at one point titled it *From the Salvation Army (Not Quite)*. *Quartet No. 2* grew out of music Ives wrote between 1907 (when parts of the second movement were begun) and 1913, but its first public performance did not take place until 11 May 1946, when the quartet was played in New York at a concert given at Columbia University. The composer Lou Harrison (1917–2003) said that, in helping Ives edit the score for performance, he was called upon to fill in a few measures of music himself.

As he does in many of his other works, Ives here completely abandons the classical notions of musical structure and formal relationships among the elements of musical discourse. He noted the work's origins in a memorandum: "After one of those Kneisel Quartet concerts, I started a string quartet—half-mad, half in fun, and half to try and have some fun with making those men fiddlers get up and do something like men." The idea was

not deemed inappropriate at the time, although Ives was somewhat harsh on the Kneisels; they were the first long-lived American string quartet (1885–1917) that played the new music of their time, including the music of some American composers. A later memorandum identifies this as a string quartet "for four men who converse, discuss, argue (in re 'politicks'), fight, shake hands, shut-up, then walk up the mountainside to view the firmament."

In the first movement, *Discussions*, the "politickal" subject may have been slavery and the Civil War, for there are references to *The Red, White, and Blue*, *Dixie*, *Marching through Georgia*, and other songs of that war. In the second movement, *Arguments* (in a preliminary version, it was entitled *Arguments and Fight*), there are bits of patriotic song struggling with fragments from the symphonies of Tchaikovsky, Brahms, and Beethoven. The slow, contemplative music of the *Call of the Mountains* brings the quartet to an end.

Programs notes provided by Arts Management Group, Inc.

Adapted and edited by Elmer Booze

2,498th Concert

23 May 2004, 7:00 pm

Joseph Smith, *pianist*

Presented in honor of the exhibition *American Masters from Bingham to Eakins: The John Wilmerding Collection*

Edward MacDowell (1860–1908)

Sonata no. 3 (“Norse”) Op. 57
(1899)

Impressively; at times
with impetuous vigor
Mournfully, yet with
great tenderness
With much character
and fire

Harold Arlen (1905–1986)

Bonbon Ode

Harry T. Burleigh (1866–1949)

From the Southland (c. 1907)

No. 2: The Frolic

No. 6: A New Hiding-Place

Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

Piano Variations (1930)

Intermission

Scott Joplin (1868–1917)

Bethena: A Concert Waltz (1905)

Billy Strayhorn (1915–1967)

Valse

Charles Tomlinson Griffes
(1884–1920)

Sonata (1918)

Feroce; allegretto con moto

Molto tranquillo

Allegro vivace

(Movements played without pause)

Ethelbert Nevin (1862–1901)

At Home: June Night
in Washington

The Musician

JOSEPH SMITH

The *New York Times* called pianist Joseph Smith’s playing “eloquent,” and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* found him a “richly sensitive interpreter.” Through performances, recordings, broadcasts, lectures, and magazine articles, Smith has enjoyed bringing many little-known pieces to the attention of the public, especially from the American repertoire. His recordings of the piano music of Griffes for Musical Heritage Society also drew high praise: “a persuasive, thoughtful interpreter” (*American Record Guide*), “He projects these pieces with complete mastery” (*High Performance Review*), and “he displayed consummate understanding and sensitivity” (*Stereophile*). Smith’s most recent CD is *Familiar Melodies* (Briosio 126). Briosio will also be releasing a new CD of waltzes from Beethoven to Poulenc, including the Strayhorn *Valse*.

Smith’s feature, “Joseph Smith’s Piano Bench,” ran monthly on National Public Radio’s “Performance Today” for two years. His column, “Rare Finds,” has appeared in *Piano Today* magazine since 1993, and he has written for the British magazine *Piano*. Smith is editor of *Four Early Twentieth-Century Piano Suites by Black Composers* (G. Schirmer), which brought Burleigh’s *From the Southland* back into print after decades of neglect, as well as *American Piano Classics* (Dover Publications), which includes a wide variety of music from the Civil War era through the early 1920s. He is the author of *Piano Discoveries* (Ekay Music) and has edited volumes of Latin American dances and works by Percy Grainger. He is working on a volume of romantic music for the Steinway series of publications and a volume of piano waltzes for Dover.

Program Notes

Concertgoers are invited to enjoy both this American Music Festival concert and an exhibition that offers a parallel encounter with nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American creativity: *American Masters from Bingham to Eakins: The John Wilmerding Collection*. Showcasing one of the most important private collections of nineteenth-century American art, the exhibition consists of fifty-one paintings by twenty-six American artists. Works by such masters as George Caleb Bingham, Frederic Edwin Church, Thomas Eakins, Alvan Fisher, William Stanley Haseltine, Martin Johnson Heade, Fitz Hugh Lane, John Marin, John F. Peto, and William Trost Richards represent four decades of collecting in an area of particular scholarly interest to John Wilmerding, former deputy director at the National Gallery and currently Christopher B. Sarofim '86 Professor for American Art at Princeton University. The exhibition includes landscapes, marine painting, portraits, genre scenes, still lifes, and figure paintings. The life spans of the artists (George Caleb Bingham was born in 1811 and Andrew Wyeth, who is still living, in 1917) roughly coincide with those of the American composers represented on this program (MacDowell was born in 1860 and Copland died in 1990). These composers made many of the same aesthetic choices as the artists of the time: they gradually emerged from the domination of their European master teachers; they experimented with sounds previously unimagined; they challenged inherited forms; and they searched for specifically American symbols. Both the composers and the artists of the period were deeply affected by symbolist poetry and by the theory of correspondences, as espoused by Charles Beaudelaire (1821–1867). According to this theory, many aspects of music and the visual arts are closely linked. Charles Griffes was not only a gifted composer but also a talented artist who produced delicate watercolors, etchings, and drawings. One of Edward MacDowell's legacies to American culture was

the establishment of the MacDowell Colony at his home in Peterborough, New Hampshire; it has served as a meeting place for musicians, writers, and artists since 1907.

MacDowell provided a poetic epigraph for his "*Norse*" *Sonata* (1899):

Night had fallen on a day of deeds.
The great rafters in the red-ribbed hall
Flashed crimson in the fitful flame
Of smoldering logs.
And from the stealthy shadows
That crept 'round Harald's throne,
Rang out a Skald's strong voice,
With tales of battles won; of Gudrun's love
And Sigurd, Siegmund's son.

The sonata does not relate a specific tale but is infused with the idea of epic storytelling. Accordingly, every movement ranges from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*. The work might better be described as a "symphony for piano" rather than as a sonata. The idea of narrative is reflected not only in its content, but also in its form. Opening with a dark, brooding passage, the sonata gradually increases in tempo to burst into an exultant theme. One has the impression of a slow introduction, followed by the beginning of a sonata form. The recapitulation makes clear, however, that the "introduction" is actually the first thematic group and the exultant theme the beginning of the second. Melodic motifs reappear in all movements. Yet, since the motifs are disguised by variation, the sonata does not seem cyclical in form but instead bound together by a characteristic melodic language. Themes with strong trochaic stresses energize the rhythm of all three movements.

MacDowell was readily embraced in his own time as "America's first great composer." Later generations rebelled at this easy acceptance, and his musical identity as "American" was questioned, or even simply denied, by

several generations of musicologists. Indeed, the first edition of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* asserted flatly: "It is hard to find anything distinctively American about [MacDowell's] music." But MacDowell himself wrote: "What we [American composers] must arrive at is the youthful optimistic vitality and the undaunted tenacity of spirit that characterizes the American man. This is what I hope to see echoed in American music." Thus, despite its Norse associations, the third sonata is also American by virtue of its heroic aspiration and excess of virile energy.

The catalogue of Harold Arlen's works testifies not only to the incredible number of memorable songs he composed, but also to their variety and adventurousness. A great innovator in popular song—he could ignore the conventional thirty-two-bar pattern and still write a hit—Arlen never tackled the large instrumental forms. The two piano pieces on this program date from 1960, late in his career. They are modest, but instrumentally conceived and characteristic. *Bon-Bon* contrasts two themes: the first is sharp-edged and cocky, the second extended in indolent *legato* phrases full of large downward leaps to far-fetched tones. The *Ode* exemplifies Arlen's predilection for free, flexible lines that resemble jazz improvisation.

The African American composer and singer Harry T. Burleigh is best remembered for his celebrated arrangements of spirituals for voice and piano, which made it possible to include this glorious body of folksongs in conventional recitals. However, even before the first of his solo spirituals appeared in 1917, Burleigh had established himself as one of the leading American art-song composers of his day. He produced only a single work for piano, the suite *From the Southland*. Its sixth movement, *A New Hiding-Place*, is based on two spirituals: the famous *My Lord, What a Morning*, and the virtually forgotten *A New Hiding-Place* (although it is quoted by W. E. B. du Bois as an epigraph to a chapter of his classic book, *The Souls of Black Folk*).

The very first notes of Copland's *Piano Variations* proclaim its compositional premise. The theme is in single notes, punctuated by heavy chords. The pauses between the phrases contribute to the starkness of the theme. The absence of harmony and rhythmic pulse implies that the intervals are the constant to be varied. The repetitions of shape within the theme and its constant return to the note C-sharp lend an insistent character. Other sets of variations may vary in the general shape of the theme, the harmonies, or the bass line, but Copland focuses on melodic intervals and the chords that accompany them. Not only all the melodic lines but also the most fleeting and colorful passages are formed from these intervals, giving the work its obsessive power. The high degree of dissonance and the strictness of form in this work have led some Copland scholars to consider it atypical. However, in other respects, such as in his use of jazz-inspired rhythms, strong tonal center, characteristic wide spacing of chords, grandeur, tenderness, and humor, it is as characteristic of the composer as his most popular works.

The energy of Scott Joplin's rags is tempered by Copland's melodic warmth. Conversely, the affectionate sentiment of *Bethena: A Concert Waltz* is enlivened by lilting, raggy syncopation. Its five strains are resourcefully differentiated in mood and phrase structure, as well as by curious contrasts of tonality. The conflation of the two most characteristic American turn-of-the-century genres, sentimental waltz and ragtime, doubles the nostalgic poignancy of *Bethena*.

The jazz composer Billy Strayhorn was particularly associated with pensive, elegiac moods, as they appear in works such as *Passion Flower*, *Chelsea Bridge*, and *Blood Count*. His *Valse*, composed around 1933 when he was still in high school and had not yet discovered his bent for jazz, shows how early the characteristic Stravian melancholy asserted itself.

Nothing that Charles Griffes wrote before his *Sonata* (1918) would suggest that he aspired to large musical forms, let alone that his only piano sonata would prove to be a masterpiece. In scope, content, and form, the sonata is unlike anything else by Griffes. He employs, both melodically

and harmonically, a synthetic mode—a scale containing two augmented seconds, as well as half and whole steps. Here, due to the scale's disjunctive intervals, the dense piano textures that enriched his previous writing become harsh and threatening. The first of the three continuous movements (*Feroce; allegretto con moto*) is introduced by a series of enraged roars. The gnarled, asymmetrical first theme mixes small intervals and large tortured leaps. The second theme is smooth and pensive, but its occasional foreshortened bars (10/8 instead of 12/8) give it an anxious undertone. Throughout the movement the texture is richly contrapuntal. Rather than a simple hierarchy of melody and accompaniment, we find a number of simultaneous voices alternating in prominence. Often, these voices seem bent on anarchic independence, impulsively veering off in different directions and conflicting with one another rhythmically. The movement's wild, rhapsodic character notwithstanding, it fulfills the requirements of an utterly traditional sonata-allegro form.

The austere theme of the slow movement (*Molto tranquillo*), barely harmonized at all, has an archaic cast. An agitated interlude leads to a new ethereal theme, heard over a faintly undulating broken fifth. The movement's close hurls us into the finale (*Allegro vivace*) with a series of screaming chords. The first theme of the finale epitomizes Griffes' use of old forms toward new ends. Here, *fugato* is not employed as an allusion to baroque tradition. Rather, the voices seem to pursue and harry one another in a violent frenzy. The other themes contrast with one another in meter as well as in character. In its cataclysmic final pages, so many accents and implied meters are combined that, despite the heavy chordal textures, the sonata seems to exult fiercely in its strength, having liberated itself from the confines of meter altogether.

Ethelbert Nevin was one of those rare composers who enjoyed immense popular success during his lifetime. His songs *The Rosary* and *Mighty Lak' a Rose* and his insidiously catchy piano piece *Narcissus* were familiar to a vast American audience in the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth centuries. Nevin described his sweet, unpretentious music with endearing modesty and accuracy: "While I am doing nothing great, I am doing the best I can, and I'm going to leave a stream of sunshine, if it is possible." In 1899 Nevin composed a piano piece entitled *At Home* and published it as the last movement of a suite, *En passant*, Op. 30. Most of his piano pieces depict picturesque subjects from foreign lands, but this one finds the picturesque in a domestic setting: a June night in Washington, D.C. Nevin's piece consists of a lilting 6/8 *siciliana* that is interrupted by an interlude in African American style. The interlude begins with a section of strumming marked "like a banjo," followed by a passage, marked *Song*, that features trochaic syncopation. The song quoted, *My Love's Waitin'*, is one of Nevin's own tunes. The interlude continues with a section simply marked "Quartet" in the range of male voices. Recent research has confirmed what Nevin may have meant to imply in this music, namely that barbershop singing is African American in origin. The interlude continues with a nostalgic outburst followed by the return of the opening material.

Program notes by Joseph Smith, adapted and edited by Stephen Ackert

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 pm.