



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

Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of
the East Building and the
2,500th Concert at the National Gallery of Art

National Gallery Orchestra

Jorge Mester, *guest conductor*

13 June 2004

Sunday Evening, 7:00 pm

East Building Mezzanine

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

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.

COVER: Paul Stevenson Oles, 1971, National Gallery of Art Archives

2,500th Concert
13 June 2004, 7:00 pm

National Gallery Orchestra
Jorge Mester, *guest conductor*

Presented in honor of the exhibitions *Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya* and *The Cubist Paintings of Diego Rivera: Memory, Politics, Place*

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)
Pulcinella Suite (1922, rev. 1949)

Sinfonia (Overture)
Serenata
Scherzino—Allegro—
Andantino
Tarantella
Toccata
Gavotta con due variazioni
Vivo
Minuetto—Finale

Silvestre Revueltas (1899–1940)
Homenaje a Federico García Lorca
(Homage to Federico García Lorca)
(1935)

Baile (Dance)
Duelo (Sorrow)
Son (Sound)

Intermission

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)
Pavane pour une infante défunte
(Pavane for a Dead Princess) (1899)

Alberto Ginastera (1916–1983)
Variaciones concertantes (1953)

Tema per violoncello ed arpa
Interludio per corde
Variazione giocosa per flauto
Variazione in modo di scherzo
per clarinetto
Variazione drammatica
per viola
Variazione canonica
per oboe e fagotto
Variazione ritmica per trombe
e trombone
Variazione in modo di moto
perpetuo per violino
Variazione pastorale per corno
Interludio per fiati
Ripresa dal tema per
contrabasso
Variazione finale in modo
di rondo per orchestra

The East Building

Designed for the Gallery's modern and contemporary art collection and the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, the East Building is known for its triangular shapes and dramatic skylit atrium, a sculptural space framing a 16,000-square-foot open interior court. Linked to John Russell Pope's 1941 neoclassical West Building in part by use of the same Tennessee marble, the modernist East Building has been recognized not only for its groundbreaking design, but also for its technical innovations and its exquisite craftsmanship, which has garnered twenty-three craft awards.

With remarkable foresight, National Gallery of Art founder Andrew W. Mellon requested that Congress set aside a plot of land adjacent to the original 1941 West Building for the museum's eventual expansion. In 1967 Mellon's children, Paul Mellon and Ailsa Mellon Bruce, along with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, offered to fund this extension, in keeping with their father's vision. Under the leadership of Paul Mellon and former Gallery directors John Walker and J. Carter Brown, building plans moved forward, and in July 1968 architect I. M. Pei was selected. He devised a radical design solution for the trapezoidal site by drawing a diagonal line through it, thus creating two triangles—one to house the museum's exhibition spaces, the other for the Gallery's study center, library, and office spaces. Construction began in 1971. On 1 June 1978, President Jimmy Carter and Paul Mellon dedicated the new building to the people of the United States.

Pei's innovative use of geometric shapes as a space for the display of art attracted wide public attention and critical acclaim, with attendance at the East Building reaching the one-million mark less than two months after the building opened. Deemed "the elder statesman of American architecture" by *New York Times* critic Herbert Muschamp, Pei, now age eighty-six, is the recipient of the Smithsonian Institution's 2003 National Design Award for lifetime achievement. The East Building itself was awarded the American Institute of Architects' 25-year Award in 2004.

The East Building has been the setting for some of the Gallery's most innovative musical programs, including concerts by George Shearing and the BBC Big Band, the Ramsey Lewis Trio, and Simon Estes, and special presentations by Gagaku, Ray Charles, Denyce Graves, the American Boy Choir, and the National Gallery Orchestra.

CONCERTS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

This occasion marks the 2,500th time that a free Sunday concert has been offered at the National Gallery. Now in its 62nd season, the concert series at the Gallery has been the setting for performances by many musicians who have had outstanding careers, including such luminaries as Claudio Arrau (1944), Eugene Istomin (1949), Earl Wild (1943–1945 and 2001), Virgil Fox (1943–1945), Bernard Greenhouse (1943–1945), Menahem Pressler (1954, 1991, and 2000), and Philippe Entremont (1953 and 2004).

Concerts at the National Gallery began during World War II, when the first director of the Gallery, David E. Finley, kept the building open on Sunday nights to accommodate the many armed forces personnel who were in Washington at the time. The idea of augmenting the museum's service to the public with music was inspired by the decision of the great English pianist Myra Hess to remain in London during the blitz and to entertain the troops and the public with recitals in London's National Gallery. Further encouragement for giving concerts in Washington was provided by Frances Nash Watson, a prominent Washingtonian and concert pianist; Mary Howe, a Washington composer; and Mrs. Dorothy Godfrey, a supporter and friend of Findley. The first concert, a performance by the United States Navy School of Music Chorus, took place on 7 December 1942.

The Gallery's first assistant to the director for music, Richard Bales, conducted his first concert at the Gallery in July 1943. In the course of his tenure, which lasted forty-two years, he organized more than 1,700 performances, some of which featured his own compositions. With the National Gallery Orchestra and the choir of Resurrection Lutheran Church in Washington, D.C., he recorded three of his cantatas: *The Union, The*

Confederacy, and *The Republic*. During the 1943–1944 concert season, Bales instituted the Gallery’s American Music Festival, a series of concerts devoted exclusively to music by American composers. This custom continues on an annual basis, and the festival is the longest-running of its kind in existence. Under Bales’ supervision, live broadcast of the concerts was initiated in 1950 and continued until 1992. Broadcasts of music from National Gallery concerts can currently be heard on National Public Radio and XM Satellite Radio, Inc. Since the mid-1960s, the concerts at the Gallery have been supported by funds bequeathed by William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin. Other significant funding has been provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Gulbenkian Foundation, and the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation.

From 1985 to 2003, concerts at the National Gallery were under the direction of George Manos. A concert pianist as well as a conductor, Manos appeared as concerto soloist with the Gallery orchestra and accompanied some of the guest artists in recital. He instituted jazz concerts in the context of the American Music Festival and hosted such jazz greats as George Shearing, Dizzie Gillespie, the Modern Jazz Quartet, Billy Taylor, and Maynard Ferguson.

Since November 2003 the concerts have been directed by Stephen Ackert, who was named head of the music department after sixteen years as the Gallery’s music program specialist. His lectures and Gallery talks on the crosscurrents between art and music in various periods and cultures are a regular feature of the Gallery’s educational offerings. Ackert looks forward to developing projects that increase and enhance opportunities for Gallery visitors to experience great art and great music concurrently.

THE NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA

The National Gallery Orchestra initially consisted of approximately twenty-five players who were also members of the National Symphony, and it was listed in programs simply as “Orchestral Ensemble.” Gradually growing, it took on the name “National Gallery Sinfonietta,” and it eventually reached the size and status of a symphony orchestra. The ensemble undertakes the full range of chamber and symphonic repertoire and has frequently presented first performances of works by American composers, most notably the 1953 premiere of Charles Ives’ First Symphony under the direction of Richard Bales.

JORGE MESTER, GUEST CONDUCTOR

Conductor and violist Jorge Mester has been praised by fellow musicians and audiences alike as one of this generation’s most dynamic conductors. He has served as music director of the Pasadena Symphony since 1984 and is conductor laureate of the prestigious Aspen Music Festival, which he led as music director for twenty-one years. Beginning with the 2004 season, he will also assume the post of music director of the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra in Florida, in addition to his work with the Pasadena Symphony. The *Los Angeles Times* declared: “Mester is a master...a virtuosic conductor,” and a conductor of “passionate vision.” Mester’s career in Mexico, the land of his birth, included the musical directorship of the Orquesta Filarmonica de la Ciudad de Mexico.

Mester’s passion for conducting extends from the stage to the classroom. He served as director of the Juilliard School’s conducting department during the early 1980s and is currently a guest conductor at the University of Southern California’s Thornton School of Music. In a testimonial to his own teachers, Mester says: “I love teaching. I hope to pay back the help Leonard Bernstein, Gregor Piatigorski, William Schuman, and Jean Morel gave me early in my career. I want

to help others the way I was helped.” Mester has taught several generations of conductors, including James Conlon, Dennis Russell Davies, Andreas Delfs, JoAnn Falletta, and John Nelson, and was a mentor early in their careers for Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Midori, Renee Fleming, Cho-Liang Lin, and Robert McDuffie.

An ardent champion of contemporary music over many years, Mester has given more than seventy world premiere performances of works by such composers as Philip Glass, Peter Schickele, Michael Daugherty, Carl Ruggles, Joan Tower, and George Tsontakis. During his twelve-year tenure as music director of the Louisville Orchestra, from 1967 to 1979, Mester made seventy-two world premiere recordings with the orchestra, a prolific achievement for both conductor and orchestra. Among the composers whose works he recorded are Dmitri Shostakovich, Krzysztof Penderecki, Carlos Chavez, Leonardo Balada, and Peter Schulthorpe.

Of Hungarian descent, Jorge Mester was born and raised in Mexico City and currently resides in Southern California. An accomplished violist, he performed with the Beaux Arts Quartet for several years before focusing exclusively on conducting. He appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Diane Saldick, LLC, of New York City.

Program Notes

Diego Rivera (1886–1957) was arguably the most important Mexican painter of the twentieth century and certainly one of the most dynamic figures in Mexico’s recent history. The exhibition *The Cubist Paintings of Diego Rivera: Memory, Politics, Place*, which remains on view at the National Gallery until 25 July 2004, emphasizes Rivera’s distinctive approach to synthetic cubism and includes works he created between 1913 and 1915, when he was in France and Spain. These extraordinary compositions of vivid colors and tactile surfaces demonstrate the artist’s engagement with themes of identity and place during a time of profound social and political upheaval in both Europe and Mexico. The exhibition explores the evocative links developed between objects, people, and places, often including specifically Mexican motifs or references to the cities Rivera inhabited at the time (Paris, Madrid, and Mallorca). Together, these paintings not only represent the artist’s finest cubist work, but they also offer important meditations on self-identity and nationalism.

Like the Rivera cubist paintings, Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas’ *Homenaje a Federico García Lorca* (*Homage to Federico García Lorca*) was also created when he was living in Madrid at a time of great political upheaval. In Revueltas’ case the tumult was caused by the Spanish Civil War. In 1936, when news came of the unjust and untimely death of Federico García Lorca (he had been executed without trial by Falangists in a village near Granada), Revueltas wrote a musical homage to the poet, entitled at that time *Lament for Federico García Lorca*, and conducted the premiere performance of the work while Madrid was under siege. The score calls for an unusual combination of instruments: piccolo, E-flat clarinet, two trumpets, trombone, tuba, percussion, piano, and strings (without violas or cellos). The work begins with the trumpet executing a noble funeral fanfare. The *Baile* (*Dance*) follows, a melody given to the brasses that gambols over a string bass. The use of the piccolo against the tuba in the dance is startling. The

trumpet, in mourning, returns. Its long, thin shadow of music fades into the *Duelo (Lament)*, which is part wail, part cradle song. In the *Son (Sound)*, a universe of emotions is revealed. Sonority is piled upon sonority, with the instruments splitting the sound into multiple syncopations.

By his own admission, Igor Stravinsky became thoroughly acquainted with the works of Italian baroque composer Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710–1736) only after being urged to do so by his compatriot, the celebrated Russian impresario Sergei Diaghilev (1872–1929). After reading through several Pergolesi scores, both instrumental and vocal, Stravinsky became enamored with the quality of the music and agreed to Diaghilev's request that he write a musical score for this ballet, *Pulcinella*. Selecting some twenty works of Pergolesi for his inspiration, Stravinsky included excerpts from the former composer's harpsichord sonatas, trio sonatas, and arias from both his serious and his comic operas. The original ballet score contains eighteen scenes, from which Stravinsky arranged eleven for a suite for chamber orchestra. In the suite format, *Pulcinella* had its premiere on 22 December 1922 with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducted on that occasion by the French-American conductor Pierre Monteux (1875–1964).

Ravel's *Pavane pour une infante défunte (Pavane for a Dead Princess)* was originally written for solo piano. One of his early compositions, the *Pavane* illuminates Ravel's gift for melodic simplicity and offers no serious difficulty for the pianist. A delicately evocative elegy, the *Pavane* gave Ravel his first taste of notoriety. The work became a favorite of many pianists, some of whom took great liberties in interpreting it. Ravel's admonishment to one youthful interpreter—to keep in mind that it was conceived as a "Pavane for a Dead Princess," not a "Dead Pavane for a Princess"—became a favorite Ravel quote. His orchestration of the piano version was completed in 1910 and enjoyed great popularity. When the prominent Hungarian-born American conductor and composer Antal Dorati (1906–1988) recorded the orchestral version, the liner notes stated: "In both its orchestral and piano versions, this little piece has survived untold abuse in performance, as well

as at the hands of the popular song writers; but when interpreted with taste...it never fails of its singularly poignant effect."

By the time the Argentine composer Alberto Ginastera wrote his *Variaciones concertantes* for chamber orchestra in 1953, he was already established as a brilliant and powerful creative spirit in Latin-American concert music. The work was commissioned by the society known as the Friends of Music of Buenos Aires and was given its world premiere performance in Buenos Aires on 2 June 1953 by the eminent Russian-born composer and conductor Igor Markevitch (1912–1983). Ginastera's description of his composition was included in the program for that performance: "These variations have as a subject an Argentine character. Instead of using folkloristic material, [I achieved] an Argentine atmosphere through the employment of [my] own thematic and rhythmic elements. The work begins with an original theme followed by eleven variations, each one reflecting the character of the instrument featured. All the instruments of the orchestra are treated soloistically. Some variations belong to the decorative, ornamental or elaborative type; others are written in the contemporary manner of metamorphosis, which consists of taking elements of the main theme and evolving from it new material." Translated into English, Ginastera's titles for the variations are: *Theme for Cello and Harp*, *Interlude for Strings*, *Humorous Variation for Flute*, *Scherzo Variation for Clarinet*, *Dramatic Variation for Viola*, *Canonic Variation for Oboe and Bassoon*, *Rhythmic Variation for Trumpet and Trombone*, *Perpetual Motion for Violin*, *Pastoral Variation for French Horn*, *Interlude for Winds*, *Recapitulation of the Theme for Double Bass and Harp*, and *Final Variation in Rondo Form for Full Orchestra*.

Program notes by Elmer Booze