

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.

Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

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

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Landover, MD 20785

www.nga.gov

COVER: Antoine Watteau, *Italian Comedians*, probably 1720,
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection



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

National Gallery of Art
2,749th Concert

Thomas Mastroianni, pianist
Stephen Ackert, narrator

November 18, 2009
Wednesday, 12:10 pm
West Building Lecture Hall

Admission free

Program

“A *Suite bergamasque* in Art and Music”

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Suite bergamasque (1905)

Prélude

Menuet

Clair de lune

Passepied

Masques (1904)

D'un Cahier d'esquisses (1904)

L'Isle joyeuse (1904)

The Musicians

THOMAS MASTROIANNI

Thomas Mastroianni is active as a chamber musician, concerto soloist, lecturer, and recitalist throughout the United States and in Europe, Latin America, Russia, and the Far East. His recent performances include a concerto with the National Symphony Orchestra; master classes, lectures, and recitals in New York City and Rio de Janeiro; and appearances in Bulgaria, Italy, and Spain. His many workshops and lecture-recitals have included topics such as “Performance Anxiety,” “The Team Approach to Wellness for the Performer,” “Chopin and Bel Canto,” “The Italian Aspect of Liszt,” and “Musical Memory.” Mastroianni is a cofounder of the Amalfi Coast Music Festival in Italy, where he teaches, performs, and gives master classes each summer. He performed “A *Suite bergamasque* in Art and Music” with Stephen Ackert at the 2009 Amalfi Coast Festival, and they will present it again next month in New York City.

Mastroianni has worked closely with members of the medical profession in researching pianists’ physiological problems and has appeared with members of the medical profession in workshops and panel discussions. He is a co-author with Richard Norris, M.D., of two articles on the problems of the performing musician. Mastroianni was invited to present a series of sessions on wellness at the 2002 World Piano Pedagogy Conference. His article “Memory and Anxiety” recently appeared in the *Journal of the International Society for the Study of Tension in Performance*, published in London.

A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Mastroianni studied at the Juilliard School of Music and Dramatic Arts, where he was a scholarship student of Beveridge Webster. After military service, he earned a doctorate in piano performance from Indiana University, where he worked with Bela Nagy and Sidney Foster. He is a professor emeritus of piano at the Benjamin T. Rome School of Music at The Catholic University of America, having served that institution as dean of music for nine years and as chairman of the piano department for twenty-five years. He previously served as chairman of the applied music division and professor of piano at Texas Tech University in Lubbock.

STEPHEN ACKERT

Stephen Ackert is head of the music department at the National Gallery of Art and an adjunct teacher of organ at Northern Virginia Community College in Alexandria, Virginia. A graduate of Oberlin College, Northwestern University, and the University of Wisconsin, Dr. Ackert studied organ and harpsichord as a Fulbright scholar in Frankfurt, Germany, where his teachers were Helmut Walcha and Maria Jaeger-Jung. He has performed organ and harpsichord recitals and presented lecture-recitals throughout Washington, DC, including the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the National Cathedral, the National Gallery of Art, and the embassies of Austria, Belgium, and Germany. In his capacity as head of the music department at the National Gallery, Ackert plans and presents concerts for the public and presents lectures and lecture-recitals on subjects that bring together the visual arts and music. He has served on the boards of directors of the Washington International Bach Competitions and the Arlington Symphony, and is currently on the advisory boards of the Amalfi Coast Music Festival and the Westfield Center.

Program Notes

Claude Debussy is popularly identified as the great impressionist composer. He was profoundly affected by the work of the impressionist artists Edgar Degas (1834–1917), Edouard Manet (1832–1883), Claude Monet (1840–1926), Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919), and Alfred Sisley (1839–1899), even though his period of activity as a composer was between 1895 and 1915, long after the impressionist period in art had waned. His contemporaries among painters were those who are today identified as post-impressionists, among them Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), Odile Redon (1840–1916), and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901). Debussy was interested in their work, too, but his personal art collection consisted of Japanese woodcuts by various artists and copies of paintings by J. M. W. Turner and James McNeill Whistler.

Debussy and all of the artists mentioned in this context had one very important interest in common—symbolist poetry and the philosophy behind it. They studiously read the works of Charles Baudelaire, Stéphane Mallarmé, Edgar Allan Poe, Arthur Rimbaud, and Paul Verlaine, and subscribed to the theory of correspondences, as set forth by Baudelaire, who maintained that all artistic endeavor is related and was fond of saying “Music is poetry without words; art is poetry without sound.” Symbolism in art is characterized by innovations in use of color, use of rapid brush strokes, and works that capture a brief moment in time. Symbolism in music is characterized by innovations in harmony, tone color, and texture, and forms that are simple and brief in duration.

Among the favorite literary and theater pastimes of symbolist composers and artists were the stories, plays, and skits that were known as masques—dramatic entertainments, usually performed by masked players representing mythological or allegorical figures, that reached their height of popularity in Europe in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Stretching back to the medieval period and perhaps even to the plays of the ancient Roman authors Plautus and Terence, masques carried on a long tradition

of stories that typically combined pastoral settings, mythological fable, and sometimes political and social messages in allegorical form. In their Italian form, masques were known as *Commedia dell'arte*, and featured three main stock roles — servant, master, and lover.

As Thomas Mastroianni plays Debussy's *Masques et bergamasques*, images that have been selected from the National Gallery's permanent collection and other sources culled by Stephen Ackert will be shown as a backdrop. The images include paintings and drawings by Antoine Watteau (1684–1721) and Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696–1770); artists who were contemporaries of Debussy, such as Henri Rousseau (1844–1910) and Julian Weir (1852–1919); and later artists who continued to be fascinated by both symbolism and *Commedia dell'arte*, such as André Derain (1880–1954) and Raoul Dufy (1877–1953).

Upcoming Concerts at the National Gallery of Art

Richard Stoltzman, clarinetist

Yehudi Wyner, pianist

Music by Carter, Reich, and Wyner

First concert in the 64th American Music Festival

November 22, 2009

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

East Building Auditorium

Presented in honor of *The Robert and Jane*

Meyerhoff Collection: Selected Works



Ensō String Quartet

Music by Corigliano, Jalbert, Moravec, and Reich

Second concert in the 64th American Music Festival

Presented in honor of *The Robert and Jane*

Meyerhoff Collection: Selected Works

November 25, 2009

Wednesday, 12:10 pm

East Building Auditorium