

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 East Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

For the convenience of concertgoers, the Garden Café remains open for light refreshments until 6:00 pm on Sundays.

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

www.nga.gov

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COVER: George Bellows, *Society Ball* [verso], c. 1907, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Eugene L. and Marie-Louise Garbaty Fund



The Seventieth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,898th Concert

Leslie Amper, pianist

Presented in honor of the exhibition *George Bellows*

June 24, 2012
Sunday, 6:30 pm
East Building Auditorium

Admission free

Program

Three American Sketches

Edward MacDowell (1860–1908)

“The Joy of Autumn” from *Ten New England Idylls*, op. 62 (1902)

Henry Cowell (1897–1965)

Tides of Manaunaun (1912)

Amy Beach (1887–1944)

Honeysuckle from Grandmother’s Garden, op. 97 (1922)

Charles Griffes (1884–1920)

Sonata (1918)

Feroce. Allegretto con moto

Tempo primo. Tranquillamente

Molto tranquillo. Appassionato

Allegro vivace

Charles Ives (1874–1954)

“Thoreau”

from *Piano Sonata no. 2* (“Concord, Massachusetts, 1840–1860”)

(1911–1912)

INTERMISSION

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Nocturne in E-flat Major, op. 9, no. 2*

Mazurka in G Major, op. 50, no. 1*

Chopin

Preludes, op. 28

No. 3 in G Major (Vivace)

No. 4 in E Minor (Largo)*

No. 7 in A Major (Andantino)*

No. 19 in E-flat Major (Vivace)

No. 20 in C Minor (Largo)*

No. 21 in B-flat Major (Cantabile)

No. 22 in G Minor (Molto agitato)

No. 23 in F Major (Moderato)

No. 24 in D Minor (Allegro appassionato)

Chopin

Fantasia-Impromptu in C-sharp Minor, op. 66*

George Gershwin (1898–1937)

Songs arranged by the composer for solo piano

The Man I Love (1924)

My One and Only (1927)

Do it Again (1922)

I Got Rhythm (1930)

* please see note on page 6

The Musician

Frequently cited in the year-end “Best of Boston” section of *The Boston Globe*, pianist Leslie Amper began her career in 1986 with a critically acclaimed New York debut. She has gone on to delight audiences in Chicago, New York, Pittsburgh, and San Francisco as well as at Monadnock Music’s Virtuoso Piano Series. A member of the Alcyon Chamber Ensemble and the Jubilee Trio, she has also been a regular participant in Boston’s Emmanuel Music celebrations of composers Brahms, Debussy, Schubert, and Schumann.

Born in Pittsburgh, Amper took full advantage of a public school program that allowed serious high school musicians to forego classes for a few hours each day in order to have adequate practice time and to take advantage of performance opportunities. She spent her high school summers at the Interlochen Music Camp and the Aspen Music Festival. After two years at Oberlin College, she continued her studies at the New England Conservatory of Music with Rudolph Kolisch, Gunther Schuller, and Russell Sherman.

An acknowledged scholar and practitioner of contemporary music, Amper has recorded Andrew Imbrie’s *Short Story* for Neuma Records. Equally adept at accompanying silent film, she has compiled piano accompaniments at the Harvard Film Archives for the short films of Georges Méliès and F.W. Murnau’s *Sunrise*, among others. Previous appearances in Washington include the musical component for the Smithsonian American Art Museum exhibition *1934: A New Deal for Artists* and the onstage piano performances in Peter Sellars’ production of Chekhov’s *A Seagull* at the National Theatre of Washington, DC.

Currently teaching at the Longy School of Music at Bard College, the New England Conservatory Preparatory Department, and Wheaton College, Leslie Amper has lectured at Boston University, Currier House of Harvard University, and the University of Pittsburgh as well as at the New Hampshire Music Festival, where she is a regular performer.

Program Notes

With more than 130 paintings, drawings, and lithographs, *George Bellows* is the first comprehensive exhibition of the artist’s work in more than three decades. Bellows is arguably the most important figure in the generation of artists who negotiated the transition from the Victorian to the modern era in American culture. Beginning with his early signature masterpieces, the exhibition contains groupings that bring to light other crucial but less familiar aspects of Bellows’ prodigious achievement, including his Maine seascapes, sporting scenes, World War I subjects, family portraits, and Woodstock, New York subjects. The exhibition remains on view in the West Building until October 8, 2012.

This evening’s program begins with American music written between 1902 and 1930, reflecting the period (1906–1924) during which Bellows produced the paintings in the exhibition. This was a time when many composers were still embracing European styles of writing. However, a change was in the air, and new and independent voices such as Henry Cowell and Charles Ives were creating new American music for the new century.

The three musical sketches that open this evening’s program have nature as their muse. MacDowell and Beach refer to natural phenomena in a classical vein, reminiscent of the Victorian era, whereas Cowell takes the contemplation abruptly forward to the modern era, with his signature arm clusters that mimic the waves of the sea.

Charles Griffes’ *Sonata*—strong, dissonant, and relentless—represents a significant departure from his earlier works. He played the premiere performance in 1918 at the MacDowell Club of New York, an association created “to promote the arts of music, literature, and the drama, architecture, painting, sculpture, and the other fine arts, and particularly to bring into prominence special works of art that are deserving of a broader recognition.” In 1917 the same club had been the venue for an exhibition of the work of twelve artists that included George Bellows’ *Both Members of This Club* and one of his nudes.

A study of the written reflections of George Bellows and Charles Ives yields some interesting comparisons between their respective philosophies and approaches to artistic expression. In his correspondence with journalist Henry Bellamann, Ives wrote, "The fabric of existence weaves itself whole. You cannot set art off in a corner and hope for it to have vitality, reality, and substance. There can be nothing exclusive about substantial art. It comes directly out of the heart of the experience of life and thinking about life and living life."

Similarly Bellows, in his essay "The Big Idea: George Bellows Talks about Patriotism for Beauty" (1917) wrote: "I am very amused with people who talk about lack of subjects for painting. . . . Wherever you go, they are waiting for you. The men on the docks, the children at the river edge, polo crowds, prize fights, summer evenings and romance, village folk, young people, old people, the beautiful, the ugly. . . . It seems to me that an artist must be a spectator of life; a reverential, enthusiastic spectator, and then the great dramas of human nature will surge through his mind."

Even before George Bellows married Emma Story in 1910, she had been an inspiration for him, making an indelible impression as a strong-minded, beautiful woman—a student artist who exemplified the ideal "Gibson Girl" of the early twentieth century. Her pose in *Emma at the Piano* was not an artifice; she was, in fact, skilled enough at the piano to accompany silent films. She was especially fond of popular music, and played many of the tunes of her day by ear. The Chopin pieces in tonight's program that are marked with an asterisk were selected because each of them contains a melody that eventually became a popular song. The *Fantaisie Impromptu in C-sharp Minor*, for example, gave rise to "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows," composed by Harry Carroll for the 1918 Broadway show *Oh, Look!*

One of the famous New Yorkers who frequented the city's social circuit in the early 1920s was George Gershwin. An avid art lover, he made it a point to visit homes where he knew there was an art collection, and he paid at least one visit to George and Emma Bellows. Gershwin played on Emma's Steinway while Bellows was there—one of those moments in history that many a lover of music and art would wish to have shared.

Special thanks to Marianne Kearney, George and Emma Bellows' granddaughter, for invaluable assistance in the preparation of these notes and the performer's commentary. She generously answered numerous questions, provided source materials, and added personal perspective to the research.

Program Notes by Leslie Amper and Stephen Ackert

Next week at the National Gallery of Art

New York Opera Society

Music by Soler, Llorca, Montsalvatge, and other composers

Presented in honor of *Joan Miró: The Ladder of Escape*

July 1, 2012

Sunday, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

Last concert of the 2011–2012 season.
Concerts resume on September 5, 2012