

Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Sixth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin Concerts

Unless otherwise noted, all programs take place in the West Building, West Garden Court.

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The 6821 Quintet

Music by Michael Djupstrom, Mamiko Hirai, and Kunihiko Murai
Presented in conjunction with the National Cherry Blossom Festival and the Ryuji Ueno Foundation

March 26, 12:10

East Building Auditorium

—
Richard Stoltzman, clarinet

Mika Stoltzman, marimba

Duo Cantando

Music by Bill Douglas, Chick Corea, Toru Takemitsu, and John Zorn

April 1, 3:30

—
Heinavanker Ensemble

Featuring ancient Estonian songs and folk hymns

Celebrating *Michel Sittow: Estonian Painter at the Courts of Renaissance Europe*

April 8, 3:30

—
Tamagawa University Taiko Drummers and Dancers

April 13, 12:10

East Building Atrium

Fretwork

Featuring music by Alexander Goehr and J.S. Bach

April 15, 3:30

—
Inscape Chamber Orchestra

Saint-Saëns, *Carnival of the Animals*, with new verses by Marc Bamuthi Joseph
Mahler, Symphony no. 4, chamber version

April 22, 3:30

—
Admission to the National Gallery of Art and all of its programs is free of charge, except as noted.

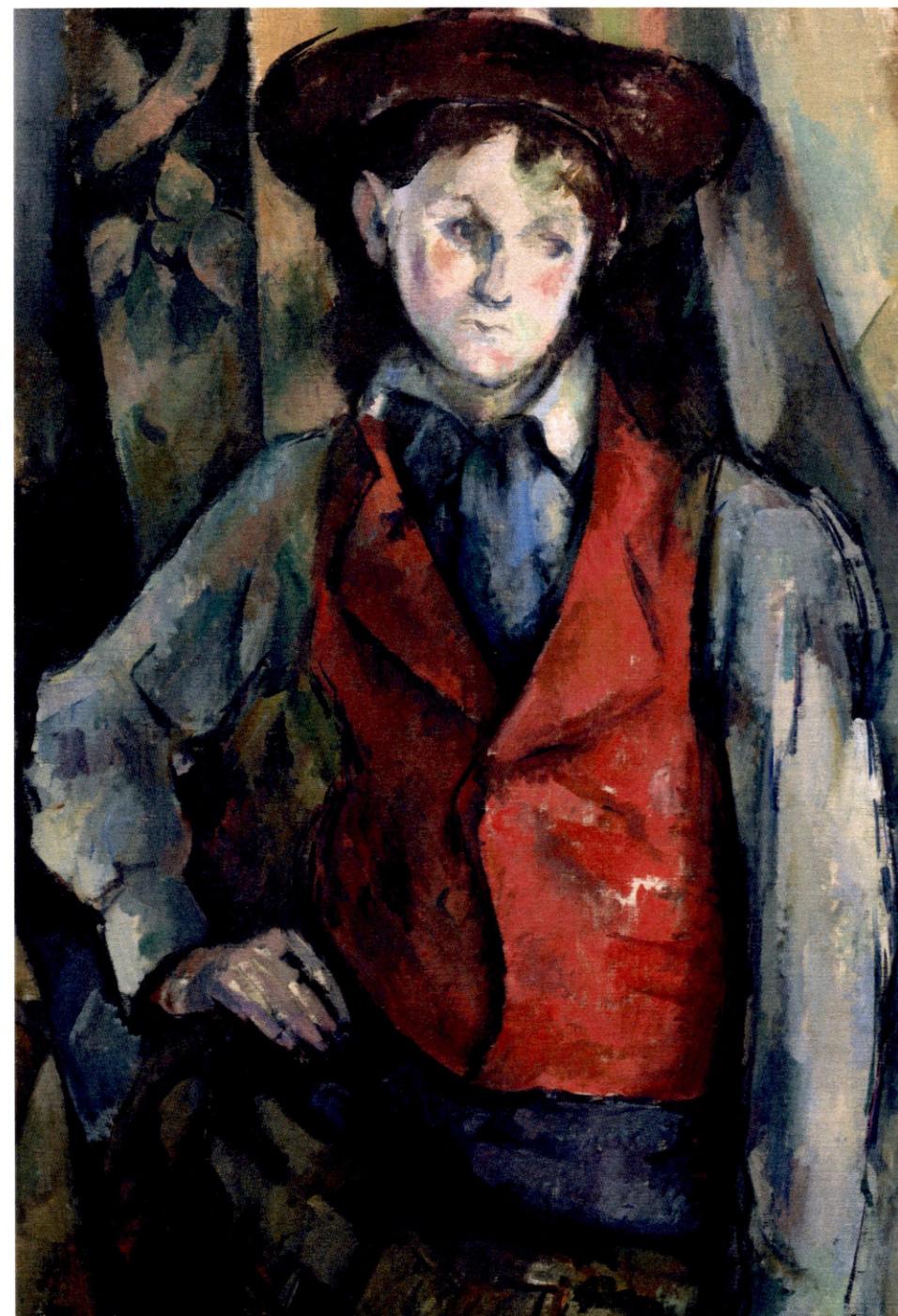
The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that all portable electronic devices are turned off.

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Cover Paul Cézanne, *Boy in a Red Waistcoat* (detail), 1888–1890, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

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76TH SEASON OF CONCERTS

MARCH 25, 2018 / NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



Benedetto Lupo. Photo by Musacchio & Ianniello

Program

Benedetto Lupo, piano

Celebrating *Cézanne Portraits*

MARCH 25, 2018 / 3:30

WEST BUILDING, WEST GARDEN COURT

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Images oubliées

Lent

Dans le mouvement d'une "Sarabande," c'est-à-dire avec une élégance grave et lente, même un peu vieux portrait, souvenir du Louvre, etc.

Quelques aspects de "Nous n'irons plus au bois," parce qu'il fait un temps insupportable

Estampes

Pagodes

La soirée dans Grenade

Jardins sous la pluie

Images, première série

Reflets dans l'eau

Hommage à Rameau

Mouvement

Intermission

Images, deuxième série

Cloches à travers les feuilles

Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut

Poissons d'or

Masques

D'un cahier d'esquisses

L'isle joyeuse

The Musician

Benedetto Lupo has been heralded by critics as an “exceptionally fine pianist... who has a remarkably fine touch and beautiful tone control” (*The Oregonian*). Praised for his “keen musical intelligence and probing intellect” (*Miami Herald*) and for combining “meticulous technique with romantic sensitivity” (*Birmingham News*), he continues to gain worldwide recognition.

Lupo has performed with prestigious orchestras worldwide, including the Los Angeles, Malaysian, Louisiana, and Naples Philharmonic Orchestras, I Musici de Montreal, the National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, and the Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería; and with the symphony orchestras of Chicago, Toronto, Calgary, Colorado, Jacksonville, Kansas City, Philadelphia, Montreal, Oregon, San Antonio, Seattle, St. Louis, and Vancouver. Festival appearances include Tanglewood with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Domaine Forget International Festival with Les Violons du Roy, and Le Festival de Lanaudière.

In Europe, he has appeared in his native Italy with the Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, Santa Cecilia Symphony, Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi, Orchestra Sinfonica Abruzzese, the National RAI Orchestra (Torino), and the festivals of Brescia and Bergamo. He celebrated Liszt's 200th birthday by performing the composer's Piano Concerto no. 1 in E-flat Major and *Totentanz* with the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig. He also performed Nino Rota's *Concerto Soirée* with the Spanish National Orchestra (Madrid) to mark the composer's 100th birthday. Lupo has appeared with the London and Slovak Philharmonics; the orchestras of Limburg (Netherlands), Odense (Denmark), Hallé (Norway), Rotterdam (Netherlands), and Liège (Belgium); and the Orquesta Sinfónica de Navarra (Spain).

Lupo won the silver medal in the 1985 Cleveland International Piano Competition and the bronze medal in the 1989 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. In 1992, he made his New York City recital debut at Alice Tully Hall, won the Terence Judd International Award, and subsequently performed at London's Wigmore Hall.

Since 2013, Lupo has taught at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, in addition to giving master classes and serving as a competition jurist internationally. Lupo's recordings include Nino Rota's *Concerto Soirée* with the Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana (Nuova Era), and a new release of the same work (Harmonia Mundi), for which he received the prestigious Diapason d'Or award. He recorded Schumann's complete works for piano and orchestra with Peter Maag and the Radiotelevisione svizzera, as well as the first CD recording of the piano version of Schumann's *Konzertstück*, op. 86 (Arts label). Lupo is featured on the Emmy-award-winning PBS documentary, *Here to Make Music: The Eighth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition*, and also on the seven-part series *Encore! The Final Round of Performances of the Eighth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition*.

Program Notes

It is commonly regarded that French artist Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) is one of the distinguished elders of twentieth-century art, a view reflected in a statement credited to Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse that “Cézanne is the father of us all.” That same sentiment may be applied to French composer Claude Debussy, a contemporary of Cézanne. Both men created masterpieces built with layers of color and a reliance on light and nature; they also heavily influenced the shift from old artistic practices to the birth of fresh and dramatic approaches to their art.

Written in 1894 but ultimately published as a suite in 1977, Claude Debussy's *Images oubliées* was titled so as to avoid confusion with his other two sets of *Images* for piano. He charmingly spoke of this work as “not for brilliantly lit salons... but rather for conversations between the piano and oneself.” Even though the opening movement, *Lent*, carries no descriptive title, it is nonetheless characterized by emotion, grace, and suppleness. The second movement, *Sarabande*, appeared first in a supplement to the 1896 *Grand Journal du Lundi*, with the inscription: “In the rhythm of a ‘sarabande,’ that is, with a slow and solemn elegance, a bit like an antique portrait, Remembrance of the Louvre, etc.” The final piece of the set is reminiscent of a toccata and pays tribute to the French nursery song *Nous n'irons plus au bois*, (*We'll Go No More to the Woods*), as reflected in the work's very title. Opening with driving energy and joy and interspersed with harp-like sonorities, the movement winds down as if the children of the nursery gradually fall asleep.

Using a title which translates as “engravings,” Debussy published his *Estampes* in 1903. In his own words, he explains the nature of these three short “engravings”: “If one cannot afford to travel, one substitutes the imagination.” The first movement of this musical journey, *Pagodes* (Pagodas), was likely inspired by the sounds of the Javanese gamelan ensembles Debussy heard at the 1889 Paris International Exposition—sounds which drew him to the non-Western musical scales and melodic use of percussion. It is said that Spanish composer Manuel de Falla (1876–1946) admired Debussy's second *Estampes*, titled *La soirée dans Grenade* (Evening in Granada), with its authentic depiction of Spanish music. The final movement, *Jardins sous la pluie* (Gardens in the Rain), is one of Debussy's most popular piano pieces and features two French children's songs, *Dodo, l'enfant do* (Sleep, Child, Sleep) and another inclusion of *Nous n'irons plus au bois*.

In 1911, Debussy said to composer Edgard Varèse: “I love pictures almost as much as music.” His genius and passion are evident in the way he fashioned today's featured *Images, première série* (1905) and *Images, deuxième série* (1907). On the surface and as reflected in each movement's title, the music truly paints a picture with sounds

and rhythm. Yet, probing the depths, the listener discovers subtleties in temperament, as well as innovative uses of rhythmic textures and chordal sonorities, to combine and shape Debussy's personal musical signature. When Debussy sent the first set to his publisher, he proudly wrote: "With no false vanity, I believe that these three pieces are a success and that they will take their place in the literature of the piano, on the left hand of Schumann, or the right hand of Chopin, as you like it."

The opening movement of his *Images, première série*, Reflets dans l'eau (Reflections in the Water), has often been compared to the familiar sight of a pebble thrown into a pond, resulting in ever-widening, farther-reaching circles. Beginning with a perfect fifth in the bass, the mood is set with gentle waves of rising and falling chords, followed by cascading arpeggios and broken chords gaining in intensity until a giant swell washes over the listener and the movement is quietly exhausted. The second movement, the Hommage à Rameau, is a stylized sarabande that effectively evokes a slow, stately eighteenth-century dance form. This restrained sense of antiquity slowly evolves to bold, broad romanticism. The final *Image* of this set, Mouvement, is a display of brilliance and virtuosity, beginning with repeated triplet figures and proceeding with a constant rhythmic energy throughout.

In *Images, deuxième série*, the bells of the title—Cloches à travers les feuilles (Bells through the Leaves)—are reflected in the whole tone scale used in the first two measures, and upon which the entire piece is constructed. The second movement, titled Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut (And the Moon Sets over the Temple That Was), mixes rich dissonances and a fragmented, chime-like melody to produce a captivating, ethereal atmosphere. The last *Image* of this set—Poissons d'or (Goldfish)—is one of the most frequently performed of the *Images* sets. It is easy to imagine the shimmering water and the movements of the goldfish—darting, graceful, placid—through Debussy's genius.

The title *D'un cahier d'esquisses* can be translated as "From a Sketchbook," however, wrote the British music critic Frank Howes, "It is by no means an insubstantial or unimportant one." Robert Schmitz, author of *The Piano Works of Claude Debussy*, suggests that this work may have been a medium used to test ideas for larger orchestral works, such as *La Mer*, which Debussy was working on at this time. Composed in 1903, this work is quietly ethereal, highly original, and presents a mixture of styles and ideas.

Program notes by Kathleen Chau, Music Program Coordinator, National Gallery of Art

Debussy often drew inspiration from other forms of art, as in the case of *Masques*, a musical setting of Antoine Watteau's (1684–1721) painting *Le Mezzetin*. Here, a guitar player is shown, recognizable by his costume as Mezzetin from the cast of the *Commedia dell'arte*, a character who is forever frustrated in love. In the background is a woman's silhouette with her back turned to Mezzetin. In Debussy's piece, an understated but palpable tension prevails throughout, underscoring the duality between tragedy and comedic irony. Debussy's friends and pupils commented that he often wore a metaphorical mask to suppress his poignant feelings, and surmised that this trait found musical expression in *Masques*.

L'isle joyeuse, written in 1904, was inspired by Debussy's summer vacation on the island of Jersey in the English Channel—a vista which no doubt provided him with striking visual images as he perfected his work. In Debussy's setting, the introduction is followed by a rhapsodic sequence that builds in volume, speed, and intensity with shorter, lyrical interruptions, all culminating in a rousing finale. *L'Isle joyeuse* is a true virtuoso piece. Debussy himself wrote, "Heavens! How difficult it is to play.... This piece seems to embrace every possible manner of treating the piano, combining as it does strength and grace."

Adapted from program notes by Michael Jacko, concert aide, National Gallery of Art, from the February 26, 2012 program