

Composed in response to the death of a close artist friend, *Pictures at an Exhibition* was intended by Mussorgsky to describe some of the late Victor Hartmann's work. The ten tonal portraits are linked together by variations of the *Promenade*, which is meant to serve as a musical accompaniment for the observer as he strolls around the exhibition. The first image of a little gnome walking awkwardly on deformed legs is depicted pathetically and somewhat pejoratively in the music, and provides a strong contrast to the minstrel voice in *The Old Castle*, which has a more elegant and grandiose tone. Mussorgsky then invites us to imagine boisterous *Children at Play* in the Tuileries Gardens in Paris, through a noisy, energetic piece that echoes with the sound of unfettered innocence. In *Bydlo*, a slow crescendo that builds and then fades evokes the image of a Polish Ox cart rumbling up a hill before trundling away into the distance. This is followed by the lively and entertaining *Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks*, which differs from the other movements in that it was inspired not by a painting but by a costume, designed by Hartmann for the ballet *Tribby*. An argument between a bold, pompous rich man and a high-voiced merchant is caricatured in *Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle*, with each man given his own humorous voice. Each hand of the pianist effectively tries to shout the other one down in a clever sequence of polymelody. This atmosphere of bustle is maintained in Mussorgsky's toccata-like *The Market Place at Limoges*, which proceeds uninterrupted into *The Catacombs*. The score of this piece is described by Mussorgsky's notation *Con mortuis in lingua morta* (*With the Dead in a Dead Language*), which serves to heighten the eerie intensity of the music. A mythical Russian witch's frenzied dance in her bizarre abode is portrayed in *The Hut of Baba-Yaga*, which leads directly to the ringing of glad bells and the chanting of monks in front of *The Great Gate at Kiev*.

– Notes by Chris Pritchett

Concerts will resume on October 6th with the National Gallery Orchestra, George Manos, conductor.

Concerts from the National Gallery are broadcast in their entirety at 7:00 p.m. on Sundays on radio station WGTS, 91.9 FM, four weeks after the live performance. The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

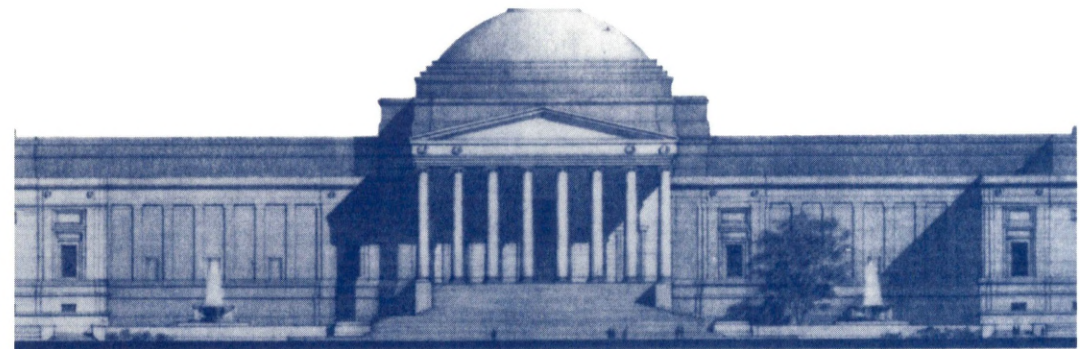
For the convenience of concertgoers the Garden Café remains open until 6:30 p.m.

The Fifty-fourth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

at the

National Gallery of Art



2201st Concert

ENRIQUE GRAF, *pianist*

Sunday Evening, June 30, 1996
at Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission Free

PROGRAM

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)	Piano Variations (1930)
Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959)	Alma brasileira (1925)
Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)	Variations sérieuses (1841)
Héctor Tosar (b.1923)	Danza criolla (1941)

INTERMISSION

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)	Pictures at an Exhibition (1874)
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Promenade
The Gnome
Promenade
The Old Castle
Promenade
Children Quarreling at Play
Bydlo
Promenade
Ballet of Unhatched Chickens
Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle
Promenade
The Marketplace at Limoges
Catacombs
(Con mortuis in lingua mortua)
Hut of the Baba-Yaga
The Great Gate of Kiev

A *protégé* of the great Leon Fleischer, ENRIQUE GRAF received a full scholarship to study at the Peabody Conservatory after coming to the United States in 1973. Since winning first prize in the University of Maryland's International Piano Competition, Graf has given concerts in many important halls, including Lincoln Center, the

Kennedy Center, and Carnegie Recital Hall, and has played with more than a dozen orchestras nationwide. Mr. Graf has given piano master-classes in Southeast Asia and South America, and has been recognized for his services to teaching by the Director's Award from the Peabody Institute. He is founder-director of the *Artists to End Hunger* society in Baltimore, and has played concerts to benefit the homeless and the American Cancer Society. Mr. Graf is currently Artist-in-Residence at the College of Charleston, South Carolina, and is an established recording artist, having CDs of works by Bach, Beethoven, and most recently Grieg to his credit.

With *Piano Variations*, his first major work for the piano, Aaron Copland introduces us to the harsh and uncompromising element of his work. This is a bare, dissonant piece, its musical fabric depending entirely upon the initial tones that form the theme. Highly original in conception, *Variations* demands power, rhythmic energy and incisive piano sonority, and constitutes a challenging addition to any pianist's repertoire.

The *Alma brasileira*, officially known as *Chôro no. 5*, is part of a series of fourteen *chôros* written by Villa-Lobos from 1920-29, and represents perhaps his freshest and most original period of composition. The word *chôro* comes from the word *carioca* meaning *from Rio*. It highlights his spontaneity and affiliation to Brazilian popular music, and embodies the improvisational nature of his work, creating an original, cliché-free sound.

Although Mendelssohn was primarily a pianist in terms of recitative skill, the *Variations sérieuses* represents the height of his composition for solo piano, and furthermore, it is one of the composer's more popular works. The piece is an excellent example of variation form built on an ingenious theme. Although it never exploits virtuosity for its own sake, several keyboard figurations are used with skill, including staccato technique, syncopation, and melody in inner voices. The piece concludes with a superbly conceived finale.

Like Enrique Graf a native of Uruguay, Héctor Tosar obtained his secondary musical training in the United States through a Guggenheim Scholarship, and studied composition under Aaron Copland. However, the *Danza criolla* was written before that time, and so does not bear the Copland stamp. Tosar's music up until 1960 was dramatic and ingenious, combining harmonic and contrapuntal structures in free forms that approach the sonata pattern, whereas his later pieces are tinged with jazz and other modern influences, courtesy of a lengthy sojourn in the United States.