

Concerts at the National Gallery of Art

November and December 2001

November

- 25 Judith Ingolfsson, *violinist* Schoenberg: *Phantasy*
Ronald Sat, *pianist* Richard Strauss: *Sonata, Op. 18*
J. S. Bach: *Partita in B Minor*
Ravel: *Tzigane*

December

- 2 Stefan Vladar, *pianist* Chopin: *Four Ballades*
24 Preludes, Op. 28
- 9 Yale Russian Chorus *To be announced*
Mark Bailey, *artistic director*
- 16 Håvard Gimse, *pianist* Grieg: *Norwegian Peasant Dances*
Sibelius: *Kylliki, Opus 41*
Chopin: *Nocturne No. 1*
Scherzo No. 2
Prokofiev: *Sonata No. 8*
- 23 Alessandra Marc, *soprano* *Christmas Concert*
- 30 James Tocco, *pianist* Brahms: *Sonata No. 1*
Corigliano: *Etude-Fantasy*
Rachmaninoff: *Moments musicaux*

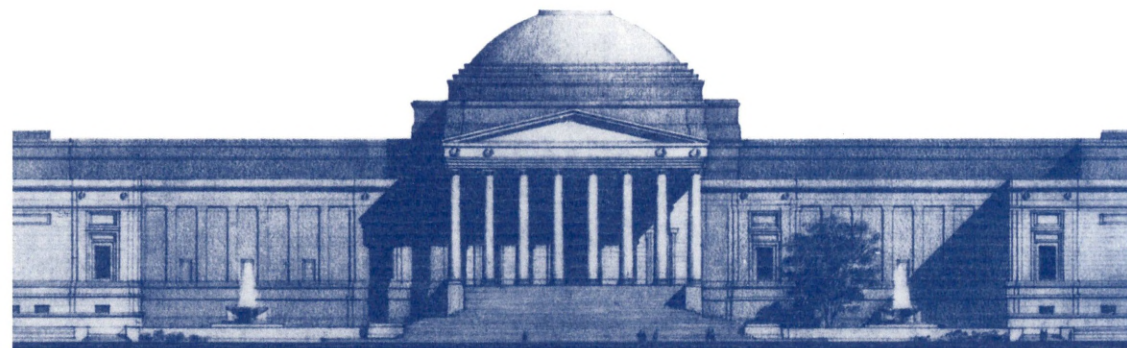
*For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:30 p.m.*

*Selections from concerts at the Gallery
can be heard on the second Sunday of each month
at 9:00 p.m. on WGMS, 103.5 FM*

The Sixtieth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2397th Concert

FRÉDÉRIC CHIU, *pianist*

Sunday Evening, 18 November 2001
Seven O'clock
West Building, East Garden Court

Admission free

PROGRAM

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809–1847)

Sonata in E Major, Op. 6
(1826)

Allegretto con espressione
Tempo di menuetto
Adagio e senza tempo
Molto allegro e vivace

Franz Liszt
(1811–1886)

Après une lecture du Dante, fantasia quasi sonata,
from “Années de pèlerinage,
deuxième année: Italie”
(1837–1849)

INTERMISSION

Frédéric Chopin
(1810–1849)

Twelve Etudes, Op. 10
(1829–1832)

No. 1 in C Major	No. 7 in C Major
No. 2 in A Minor	No. 8 in F Major
No. 3 in E Major	No. 9 in F Minor
No. 4 in C-sharp Minor	No. 10 in A-flat Major
No. 5 in G-flat Major	No. 11 in E-flat Major
No. 6 in E-flat Minor	No. 12 in C Minor

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

An American pianist of Chinese heritage and a longtime resident of France, **Frédéric Chiu** studied piano and computer science at Indiana University, followed by further studies in music at the Juilliard School of Music. Chiu began his performing career in Paris and has become one of the best-known pianists playing in France. He has performed in many of the major European cities, including Rome, Milan, Brussels, Antwerp, Berlin, Frankfurt, The Hague, Warsaw, Prague, and London. He performs regularly in Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, and Africa. In North America, Chiu has played in the Mostly Mozart Festival in New York, at the Ambassador Theatre in Pasadena, and the Place des Arts in Montreal. He plays regularly at Lincoln Center in New York and is a regular guest of the acclaimed Newport Music Festival. He has traveled across the United States on extended recital tours with community concerts. A recipient of many prestigious awards, including an Avery Fisher Career Grant, the Petscheck Award, and an American Pianists Association Fellowship, Chiu gained international attention when he failed to win an award in a distinguished international competition. His elimination before the final round of the 1993 Van Cliburn Competition inspired enormous sympathy and protest. Prominent stories in the New York Times referred to him as the “maverick American pianist.” *Le Monde* (Paris) exclaimed: “He has reinvented virtuosity...a phenomenon that must be heard.” An exclusive and prolific recording artist for the Harmonia Mundi label, Chiu has released twenty CDs. They include Liszt’s transcriptions of Schubert’s *Schwanengesang*, Chopin’s *Mazurkas*, *Etudes*, and *Rondeaux*, and the entire piano works of Prokofiev, complete in nine volumes. Chiu recently opened the National Symphony Orchestra’s season with the Liszt transcription of Beethoven’s *Fifth Symphony* to a standing ovation. Frédéric Chiu appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Arts Management Group, Inc., of New York City.

Written one year earlier than Beethoven’s *Sonata, Op. 106* (“*Hammerklavier*”), Mendelssohn’s *Sonata in E Major, Op. 6*, was the only one of his sonatas that he deemed worthy of publication. It is a refined work, less stylized and more experimental in its compositional

technique than any other of his piano sonatas. Obvious references to Beethoven can be seen when one compares this sonata to Beethoven's *Sonata in A Major, Op. 101*. The tonalities of the two works, E major and A major, are harmonic next-door neighbors, and their proximity is emphasized by the predominant plagal character of the Mendelssohn work.

The unusual 6/8 meter of the opening movement, with its lilting rhythm and uncharacteristically reserved tempi, is arresting to the listener who is familiar with classical piano sonatas. The sudden reappearance of the principal theme of the first movement toward the end of the sonata gives both thematic and dramatic unity to the work. This striking structural technique would find emulation in the works of Brahms, Liszt, and even Prokofiev. The experimental third movement sets this work apart in the genre of the piano sonata. Instead of the customary slow movement, Mendelssohn incorporates an ornate recitative, dramatically intensified by its fugal presentation in five voices. Written without barlines, this movement (*Adagio e senza tempo*) nevertheless contains a rhythmic pulse that is dictated by the harmonic progression. It is vaguely reminiscent of the *Adagio espressivo* section in the first movement of Beethoven's *Sonata, Op. 109*. Unexpected transitions take the music through short, choralelike passages that alternate with a brief reference to the first movement. At its close, the *Adagio* leads headlong into the finale.

The *Dante Sonata*, as it is traditionally called, is one of Liszt's major works for the piano and is the final work in *Book II* of his musical travelogue *Années de pèlerinage*, or *Years of Pilgrimage*. It is revolutionary in its severity, its demands on the instrument, and its emotional scope. This work represents the first step in Liszt's approach towards his monumental *Sonata in B minor* and his *Dante Symphony*, in terms of his experiments in structural organization, the mutation of themes, and the use of tonal areas with symbolic significance. Liszt's ability to transform his life experiences into music was totally unimpeded by the time the second version of this musical journey appeared in 1858.

With very few exceptions, the keyboard studies written prior to those of Chopin lack both the technical brilliance and aesthetic quality inherent in his *Etudes*. Each etude addresses a particular pianistic problem: *No. 1* strengthens the right hand in the playing of arpeggios. *No. 2* strengthens the third, fourth, and fifth fingers of the right hand in the playing of chromatic scales. The melody of *No. 3* was copied by the composer of the popular song, *No Other Love*, giving it the distinction of being the only etude ever to have made the "Tin Pan Alley" roster of popular music. It is a valued study in the art of *bel canto* as applied to the piano. *No. 4* is a tour-de-force for both hands, played with great speed and deftness and concluding with a cyclonic ending that is roguish and brilliant at the same time. *No. 5*, known as the "*Black Key*" *Etude*, has the right hand playing entirely on the black keys, a delight to all who can master the technique. *No. 6* is a lugubrious nocturne with imposing harmonic changes requiring the maximum control of finger weight. *No. 7* is a toccata that requires a right wrist of Herculean strength to manipulate the mixed double notes of thirds and sixths. *No. 8* is a scintillating study in finger dexterity, with special attention focused on obtaining smoothness of motion when passing the thumb under the fingers in the right hand. *No. 9*, with its wide leaps in the left hand, poses enormous difficulty for the small hand. One of the most sonorous etudes of this opus, it demands unparalleled virtuosity. *No. 11* emphasizes both hands playing open chords in a harplike fashion. It is an equal contender for the nickname "*Aeolian*" that is applied to the first etude in *Op. 25*. *No. 12*, better known as the "*Revolutionary*" *Etude*, is a wonderful study for the left hand, but, as pianist Alexander Uninsky (1910–1972) pointed out: "There is a storm of passion in this powerful outburst that is unequalled in [Chopin's] other etudes. Patriotic pride, defiance, and rage are given expression in a vividly dramatic fashion. Pedagogic aspects need not concern us here—to call this work a tone poem for the piano would be more appropriate."

Program notes on Liszt and Mendelssohn works
by Frédéric Chiu, adapted and edited by Elmer Booze
Program notes on the Chopin *Etudes* by Elmer Booze