CONCERTS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART June 1993

Dates and Performers

13 Auréole Trio Mary Hammann, viola Laura Gilbert, flute Barbara Allen, harp Honoring the exhibition Great French Paintings from the Barnes Foundation: Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, and Early Modern Programs (Subject to change) Ravel: Sonatine en trio Deborah Drattell: Conspiracy of Dreams Joseph Jongen: Deux pièces en trio Toru Takemitsu: "And then I knew 'twas wind" Claude Debussy: Sonate and Syrinx

20 Eugenia Zukerman, *flutist* Dennis Helmrich, *pianist*

Kent Kennan: *Night Soliloquy* Charles Griffes: *Poem* Messiaen: *Le merle noir* Cécile Chaminade: *Concertino*

Bach: Sonata in B Minor

Copland: Duo for Flute and Piano

27 Louis Lortie, pianist

Schumann: Bunte Blätter Brahms: Six Hungarian Dances Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsodies Nos. 3 and 9

Final concert of the season

Concerts resume October 3, 1993, with a performance by 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 is not allowed.

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

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

at the

National Gallery of Art



2091st Concert

NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA

GEORGE MANOS, Conductor

Sunday Evening, June 6, 1993 at Seven O'clock West Building, West Garden Court Admission Free

PROGRAM

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Sergey Prokofiev (1891–1953)

Academic Festival Overture Opus 80 (1881)

Symphonic Suite from Lieutenant Kijé Opus 60 (1934)

I. The Birth of Kijé II. Romance III. Kijé's Wedding IV. Troika V. The Burial of Kijé

INTERMISSION

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) Symphony No. 4 in A Major ("Italian") (1833)

Allegro vivace Andante con moto Con moto moderato Saltarello: Presto

In order to understand the subtle humor behind Brahms' Academic *Festival Overture*, it is necessary to remember that he was a protagonist in what was considered in late nineteenth century Germany to be an epic and ultimately significant struggle between classicism, as spearheaded by Brahms, and progressivism, as embodied in the works of Richard Wagner. When the regents of the University of Breslau conferred an honorary degree upon Brahms in 1879, they saw themselves as lending their academic authority to conservative classicism in the arts, and fully expected the composer to grace the occasion with an appropriate work, such as a "Doktor-Symphonie" or a solemn hymn and fugue. Always ready to deflate pomposity in all of its forms, Brahms produced a work which must have shocked its first audience of dignified scholars at the honorary degree ceremony. His overture integrates the melodies of four traditional German student songs, one of which, Fuchsentritt, was a drinking song associated with the hazing of freshmen. The other melodies are Wir hatten gebauet ein staatliches Haus (which was considered so inflammatory that it was banned by the German governments of the Metternich era,) Hochfeierlicher Landesvater, and Gaudeamus igitur, which brings the overture to an exhilarating close.

Prokofiev welcomed the commission he received in 1933 from the Belgoskino film studios to write the score for a film based on the story, *Lieutenant Kijé*, because he felt insecure about what the Soviet government expected from composers, and this commission gave a kind of advance official sanction to the work. Lieutenant Kijé was a fictitious character who came into being when Czar Nicholas I misread a military report and issued orders to be carried out by the lieutenant whose name he thought he had read. Not daring to tell the Czar that he had made a mistake, his courtiers invented a life for the lieutenant, complete with parents, a wife, a career, and finally a burial. The ironic humor of the plot is especially apparent in the music for the burial scene, which expresses a collective sigh of relief on the part of the courtiers, who were saved by Kijé's "death" from having their ruse discovered. The symphonic suite is Prokofiev's own reworking for full orchestra of the film score, which was for a chamber ensemble.

The circumstances surrounding the conception of Mendelssohn's *Italian* Symphony and his subsequent revisions of it reveal two contrasting sides of his personality. It was written during a journey the composer took to Italy in 1830 — his first and only visit to that country — which was filled with scenes and occasions of utmost enjoyment and gaiety. Upon his return to Germany, however, Mendelssohn began to agonize over the work, constantly revising it and changing minute details. Although he did conduct one performance of the symphony in 1833, he never approved it for publication during his lifetime. It was finally published after his death, using his last revised manuscript as the basis for the printed edition.