

Twist of Fate, the first binary movement, begins loudly and dramatically and ends quietly in sadness. Between these extremes come two very different tempos and moods: *Twist of Fate* clambering ahead in blows and screams and followed by an ironic *Mazurka*. The whole is a meditation on the seeming inevitability of war and tragedy in human existence.

The first of the next pair, *Apotheosis of J.V.*, requires separate explanation. John Verrall, who was born in 1909 in Britt, Iowa, studied at the Budapest Conservatory and the Royal College of Music in London. He taught me composition, counterpoint, orchestration, and so much else from 1949 on through my teens in Washington State. While not utilizing any of Verrall's thematic material, this music is reminiscent of his style. We move directly into *Dithyramb* after a short transitional passage. Here, headlong and frenetic, the music's forward drive is only slightly held back toward the midpoint by a recall of the mysterious section from *Twist of Fate*. We return to the main tempo, which leads to a frenetic coda."

- notes by Walter Verdehr

CONCERTS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
Under the Direction of George Manos

JANUARY 1997

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| 19 | Jason Stearns, <i>baritone</i>
Diane Winter Pyles, <i>pianist</i> | Schumann: <i>Liederkreis, Opus 39</i>
Debussy: <i>Ariettes oubliées</i>
Poulenc: <i>Le bestiaire</i> |
| 26 | Wu Han, <i>pianist</i>
Honoring the exhibition:
<i>Splendors of Imperial China:
Treasures from the National
Palace Museum, Taipei</i> | Haydn: <i>Sonata, Hoboken 52</i>
Beethoven: " <i>Moonlight</i> " <i>Sonata</i>
Chopin: <i>Andante spianato et
Grande polonaise, Opus 22</i>
Debussy: <i>Estampes</i> |

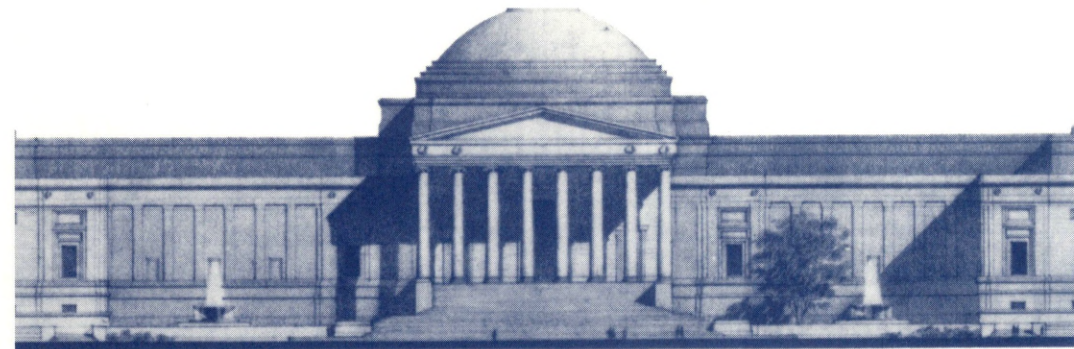
Concerts from the National Gallery are broadcast in their entirety at 7:00 p.m. on Sundays on radio station WGTS, 91.9 FM, four weeks after the live performance. The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

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

The Fifty-fifth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2216th Concert

THE VERDEHR TRIO

WALTER VERDEHR, *violin*

ELSA LUDEWIG-VERDEHR, *clarinet*

GARY KIRKPATRICK, *piano*

Sunday Evening, January 12, 1997
at Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission Free

composers Leslie Bassett, Alan Hovhaness, Karel Husa, Thea Musgrave, Ned Rorem, and Gunther Schuller, and is hosted by Martin Bookspan and Peter Schickele. The Verdehr Trio is in residence at Michigan State University and appears at the Gallery through the cooperation of Dodie Lefebvre, Artists Representative, of New York City.

Mozart's *Trio in B-flat Major* is a transcription of the *Sonata for Piano, Four Hands, K. 358*, which was played earlier this season here at the Gallery by pianists Igor Kipnis and Karen Kushner. The orchestral characteristics of the writing become strikingly apparent as the work is heard with other instruments carrying the melodic lines. At times, the trio takes on the character of a concerto, as each instrument takes its turn to stand out.

Max Bruch's most famous compositions are his *Scottish Fantasy* for violin and orchestra and his *Kol nidrei* variations for cello and orchestra. He also wrote a considerable amount of chamber music, including the *Eight Pieces, Opus 83*. They were first performed in 1909 by a trio consisting of clarinet, viola, and piano, with the clarinet part played by Bruch's son, Max Felix.

Created specifically for the celebration of the composer's 85th birthday at the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy, Gian Carlo Menotti's *Trio for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano* was given its premiere performance (first and second movements only) at that Festival on July 17, 1996 by the Verdehr Trio. The capricious first movement combines witty dance-like figures with the composer's innate feeling for drama and melodic line. An expressive slow movement displays the true genius of the operatic master, as emotionally intense melodies ring forth spontaneously. The third movement, a lively fugue, was not completed until September of 1996, when the trio presented the work in its entirety on the occasion of Menotti's visit to the campus of Michigan State University.

About his work on tonight's program, Jonathan Kramer writes: "I composed the *Serbelloni Serenade* at the Villa Serbelloni in Bellagio, Italy. This wonderful place, run by the Rockefeller Foundation as a retreat for scholars and artists, is beautiful and peaceful. As I had previously been writing a book on music and postmodernism, I had little time before coming to Bellagio to plan what music I would compose. I knew only that it was to be a trio for clarinet, violin, and piano, for the magnificent Verdehr Trio. My first day at the Rockefeller Center I went to the composer's studio, in the woods

overlooking Lake Como. I stared at blank music paper. Three weeks later, I drew a double bar at the conclusion of the piece. Freed from concerns of daily existence and living far away from the outside world, I was able to work uninterrupted for eight to ten hours a day, seven days a week.

Since one of the theses of my book is the demise of structural unity in postmodern music, I wanted the music to have a healthy degree of disunity: *non sequiturs*, discontinuities, unrelated materials, surprises. But pieces have a mind of their own. Probably because I wrote it in one intense period, the *Serbelloni Serenade* ended up tightly unified. I kept discovering that different parts of the piece, which had tricked me into believing that they were unrelated, were actually thinly disguised variants of each other. I saw that the form, far from being the free association of ideas I had wanted, was quite logical. To my amazement, I found the piece beginning and ending in the same key.

This serenade is nonetheless postmodern in its use of different styles, references to various historical periods, and surprising juxtapositions. But, because of how it was written, it is more integrated than I had expected or planned it to be.... The *Serbelloni Serenade* shows how orderly my existence was when I composed it. It resolutely refused to become the statement on disorder I had tried to make it."

Jonathan Kramer was born in Hartford, Connecticut and received his Bachelor of Arts degree *magna cum laude* from Harvard and his Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. His composition teachers included Karlheinz Stockhausen, Roger Sessions, Leon Kirchner, Seymour Shifrin, and Andrew Imbrie. Currently a professor at Columbia University in New York City, he has previously taught at Oberlin, Yale, and the University of Cincinnati.

About his *Trio for Clarinet, Violin, and Piano (1993)*, William Bolcom writes: "I have always been interested in the binary form in which both parts are mutually exclusive or nearly so; the first *G Minor Nocturne* of Chopin is one of the few pure examples I know of, but I suppose the first two movements of Mahler's *Fifth* taken together become a binary form of sorts. So I will discuss the two pairs of movements as just that - pairs that comment on each other, just as each half faces its counterpart musically within each double movement.