Concerts at The National Gallery of Art Under the Direction of George Manos

December 1997

7 Todd Crow, pianist

Schubert:

Sonata, D. 960

Bartók:

Dance Suite

Haydn:

Sonata in C Major

14 Dunsmuir Piano Quartet

Brahms:

Piano Quartet in G

Minor

Haydn:

Piano Trio in E.

Major

Robert Helps: Quartet for Piano,

Violin, Viola, and Cello

21 Columbia Collegiate Chorale Christmas Concert James Bingham, conductor

28 Gottlieb Wallisch, pianist

Beethoven:

Sonata, Opus 31/3

Debussy: Chopin:

Estampes Sonata No. 2

January 1998

National Gallery Orchestra George Manos, conductor

Gala Viennese New Year Concert

11 The Pèlerinage Duo Jerry Wong and Shi-yu Cheng, duo pianists

Rachmaninoff: Suite No. 2

Fantasie in F Minor Schubert:

Stravinsky:

Sonata

Milhaud:

Scaramouche

18 Håkan Hagegård, baritone Warren Jones, pianist

Schubert:

Songs from

Schwanengesang

Ravel:

Don Quichotte à

Dulcinée

Songs by Hugo Wolf

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 pm.

The Fifty-sixth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and E LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2248th Concert

NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA

GEORGE MANOS, conductor

Sunday Evening, November 30, 1997 at Seven O'Clock West Building, West Garden Court

Admission Free

PROGRAM

Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924)

Preludio sinfonico (1876)

Vincent Persichetti (1915–1987)

Serenade No. 5 Opus 43 (1950)

Prelude Poem Interlude Capriccio Dialogue Burla

Georges Bizet (1838–1875)

Suite No. 1 from "Carmen" (1875)

Prélude Aragonaise Intermezzo Seguedille

Les dragons d'Alcala

Les toréadors

INTERMISSION

Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826)

Symphony No. 1 in C Major (1807)

Allegro con fuoco

Andante

Scherzo: Presto Finale: Presto Giacomo Puccini was an aspiring student organist-composer at the Giovanni Pacini Music Institute in his home town of Lucca, Italy when he wrote his *Preludio sinfonico*. The work was performed once by his fellow students at the Institute, but was not performed again until it was published in 1977. The eighteen-year-old Puccini had already made up his mind that some day he would go to Milan and study opera, but for the time being he had to fulfil the expectations of his family and follow in the footsteps of his father, Michele, who had been the organist of the Church of San Martino in Lucca. From time to time, the young organist would startle those priests and parishioners who were listening carefully to his improvisations by including themes from some of his favorite Verdi and Donizetti operas. He was finally able to enter the Milan Conservatory in 1880 at the age of twenty-two, thanks to a scholarship instituted by Queen Margherita for talented sons of poor Italian families.

Vincent Persichetti cited two main currents within his creative disposition: one graceful and the other "gritty." It was the former side of his musical personality that came to the fore when he wrote his fifteen *Serenades*, most of which are for piano solo. One is scored for ten wind instruments and several are for various chamber ensembles, but the *Serenade No. 5* is the only one he wrote for orchestra. A native of Philadelphia, Persichetti lived and taught in that city until he was appointed to the faculty of New York's Juilliard

School of Music in 1947.

The arias and choruses from Bizet's *Carmen* are so popular today that it is difficult to believe that the work was ill-received by the public and panned by the critics when it was introduced in 1875 at Paris' Opéra Comique. The work satisfied neither the opera establishment, who found the music disjointed and the plot scandalous, nor the avant-garde, who looked for the influence of Wagner in every new opera. Stunned by the rejection of what he rightly sensed was his masterpiece, Bizet slipped into acute depression from which he never recovered. He died of a heart attack on June 1, 1875, before *Carmen* had even completed its first short run of performances.

Although better known as a composer of opera and overtures, Carl Maria von Weber was also adept at writing symphonies, as is evidenced by his two works in this genre. Influenced by Beethoven, who had composed his first symphony in C major seven years before, von Weber chose that key for his own first symphony. The tempo indication of the first movement, *Allegro con fuoco*, gives advance notice of the vigorous and dramatic mood that will prevail throughout most of the work.