

when I play it with the left hand alone! The same degree of difficulty, the nature of [the] technique...everything conspires to make me feel like a violinist.”

Max Reger, who was a great admirer of Mendelssohn and Schumann, was most strongly influenced by Wagner. He inherited the latter’s harmonic style, which involved extending the possibilities of tonality without discarding its framework. His *Four Special Studies* for the left hand are quite typical in their harmonic, polyphonic, and technical complexity. Like many of Reger’s compositions, the set ends with an intricately devised fugue.

Like Carl Reinecke, Emil von Sauer was a contemporary and admirer of Count Geza Zichy and dedicated his *Waldandacht (Konzert-Etude Nr. 28)* to him. A pupil of Franz Liszt, Nikolay Rubinstein, and Ludwig Deppe, von Sauer enjoyed a long concert career that stretched between 1882 and 1936.

Felix Blumenfeld dedicated his *Etude in A-flat Major, Op. 36*, to his remarkable colleague, Leopold Godowsky, who felt that even two-handed pianists should cultivate left-hand virtuosity. Ironically, Blumenfeld’s right hand was paralyzed by illness not long after he wrote the etude, and it ultimately became one of the few pieces he could play.

The two Chopin/Godowsky *Etudes* are from Godowsky’s elaborate series of fifty-three paraphrases on the complete set of Chopin’s *Etudes*. Godowsky, whose virtuosity was regarded as without equal in his time, pushed the envelope of technical demands to almost unimaginable limits. Included in the series are several tour-de-force etudes for the left hand alone, from which the two on tonight’s program were selected.

Program notes by Gary Graffman,
edited and adapted by Elmer Booze

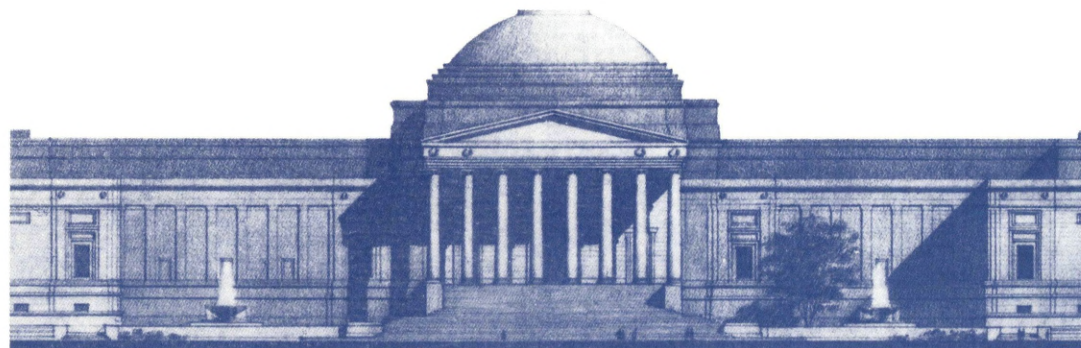
*The use of cameras or recording equipment
during the performance is not allowed.*

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

The Sixty-first Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2442d Concert

GARY GRAFFMAN, *pianist*

Sunday Evening, 12 January 2003
Seven O’clock
West Building, East Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Alexander Scriabin (1845–1924) Prelude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 9, No. 1
Nocturne in D-flat Major, Op. 9, No. 2 (1894)

Carl Reinecke Sonata, Op. 179 (1824–1920)
Allegro moderato
Andante lento (*nemenj rózám a tarlóra*)
Menuetto: Moderato
Finale: Allegro molto

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) Chaconne from the Suite in D Minor for Solo Violin, S. 1004 (1720)
Arranged for piano left hand by Johannes Brahms

Intermission

Max Reger (1873–1916) Four Special Studies (c. 1901)
Scherzo
Humoreske
Romanze
Präludium und Fuge

Emil von Sauer (1852–1942) Waldandacht (Konzert-Etude Nr. 28)

Felix Blumenfeld (1863–1931) Etude in A-flat Major, Op. 36 (1905)

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Etude in E-flat Minor, Op. 10, No. 6
Etude in B Minor, Op. 25
Arranged for piano left hand by Leopold Godowski

The Artist

“**Gary Graffman** played like the commanding musical personality that he is, covering the keyboard from one end to the other with just his left hand, and drawing from it the strong, clean, clear piano tone that has always characterized his playing” (the *Palm Beach* [Florida] *Daily News*). As one of the most celebrated pianists of his generation, Graffman has been a major figure in the music world since winning the prestigious Leventritt award in 1949. For the next three decades he toured almost continuously, playing the most demanding works in the piano literature, both in recital and with the world’s great orchestras.

In 1979, however, Gary Graffman’s performing career was curtailed by an injury to his right hand. His performances are now limited to the small but brilliant repertoire of concertos written for the left hand alone. In 1985 Graffman played the North American premiere of the Korngold *Concerto for Piano Left Hand and Orchestra*, which was written in 1924, with Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic. He recently recorded Richard Strauss’ *Paragon* for Deutsche Grammophon with the Vienna Philharmonic, conducted by André Previn. In April 1996 Graffman performed the world premiere of William Bolcom’s “*Gaea*” *Concerto for Piano and Two Left Hands* with his friend and colleague Leon Fleisher in a Baltimore Symphony Orchestra concert led by David Zinman. The work was commissioned jointly by the Baltimore, St. Louis, and Pacific Symphonies. Gary Graffman gave world premieres of two commissioned works again in 2001–2002: Richard Danielpour’s *Concerto for Left Hand* with Leonard Slatkin and the National Symphony Orchestra, and Daron Hagen’s *Seven Last Words* with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra under JoAnn Falletta. He also premiered a new concerto by Luis Prado with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

The reduction in Graffman's concert activity has provided him with a remarkable opportunity to expand his horizons beyond the concert stage. Most notable has been his leadership of the renowned Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. He first joined the piano faculty of that all-scholarship conservatory in 1980 and became its director in 1986, following such illustrious predecessors as Josef Hofmann, Efreim Zimbalist, and Rudolf Serkin. He was appointed president of the Curtis Institute in 1995 and remains active as a teacher and coach of the piano and chamber music students. Graffman is the author of a highly praised memoir, *I Really Should Be Practicing*, as well as popular articles on nonmusical subjects. He finds time to pursue a scholarly interest in Asian art, which he collects, and photography.

Born in New York of Russian parents, Gary Graffman began to play the piano at age three. His father, a violinist, had given him a small fiddle, but when the instrument proved too cumbersome, piano lessons were substituted, with a planned return to the violin. The young Graffman's affinity for the piano soon became evident, however, and at age seven he was accepted by the Curtis Institute for study with the renowned pianist Isabelle Vengerova. After graduation from Curtis, he worked intensively for several years with Vladimir Horowitz and at the Marlboro Music Festival with Rudolf Serkin.

A Steinway artist, Gary Graffman records for the Arabesque, Deutsche Grammophon, New World, and SONY Classical labels and appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with ICM Artists, Ltd., of New York City.

Program Notes

Composers who write piano music for the left hand alone face unique problems, as do performers of this repertoire. The composer faces a daunting challenge of writing music for five fingers that must sound as if it is being played by ten, and the pianist's left hand must play the dominant role, rather than fulfilling its normal subsidiary position as accompanist. Another challenge is the manipulation of the melodic line. Usually played by the fourth and fifth fingers of the right hand, the

melodic line has to be played by the left-hand thumb. It is no wonder that very little music has been written in this genre and that the existing works have almost always been composed for a specific purpose or artist. Much of this repertoire owes its existence to the Viennese pianist Paul Wittgenstein (1887–1961), who lost his right arm to shrapnel in World War I. In addition to the Ravel *Concerto for Left Hand*, he commissioned works for piano and orchestra by Richard Strauss, Sergey Prokofiev, and Benjamin Britten. Significant concertos for the left hand were also written by Franz Schmidt and Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

Scriabin wrote his *Prelude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 9, No. 1*, and *Nocturne in D-flat Major, Op. 9, No. 2*, in 1894, after he had injured his right hand through excessive practicing. An excellent and popular pianist, Scriabin recovered from his ailment and resumed his two-handed performing career. Nevertheless, he included these works in his 1906–1907 United States tour, and their presence on the program enhanced the box office appeal of his concerts.

Carl Reinecke lived before the era of Wittgenstein commissions, and it is presumed that he wrote his *Sonata, Op. 179*, for the reigning one-handed pianist of his time, Count Geza Zichy (1849–1924). Zichy, who lost his right arm in a hunting accident, often played his own compositions on his lengthy charity tours. Although the Reinecke sonata bears no dedication, it is likely that Zichy played this charming work, which was composed late in Reinecke's long life and exemplifies his gift for inventive melodies and gracefully flowing keyboard writing.

Every piece on tonight's program is an original composition for the left hand alone except for Brahms' transcription of the Bach *Chaconne* from the *Suite for Solo Violin, S. 1004*. This is an early example of a work transcribed for the left hand alone from the repertoire for another instrument. Brahms completed his transcription in 1877, when his great friend Clara Schumann had been forced to cancel a concert tour because of an injury to her right hand. He sent it to her immediately with the following statement: "I consider Bach's *Chaconne* one of the most wonderful and unfathomable pieces of music, and the only one way in which I can secure undiluted pleasure from the piece is