27 May	Zuill Bailey, cellist j. y. song, pianist	Mendelssohn: Variations concertantes Beethoven: Cello Sonata No. 4 Crumb: Sonata for Solo Cello Prokofiev: Sonata, Op. 119
4	Julius Berger and Hyun-Jung Berger, cellists Presented in honor of the exhibition Houdon: Sculptor of the Enlightenment	Barrière: Sonata in G Major Mozart: O Isis and Osiris Haydn: Duet in G Major Boccherini: Adagio and Allegro
11	The Aulos Ensemble Presented in honor of the exhibition <i>Houdon:</i> Sculptor of the Enlightenment	Rameau: Suites from Les Fêtes d'Hébé and Les Indes galantes Works by Jacques Duphly and Jean Jacques Rousseau
18	Livia Sohn, violinist	Works by Jonathan Berger and Jeno Hubay J.S. Bach, <i>Sonata</i> , <i>BWV 1016</i> Grieg; <i>Sonata No.</i> 2
25	Klaus Hellwig, pianist	Beethoven: <i>Sonata, Op. 14/2</i> Schumann: <i>Davidsbündlertänze,</i> <i>Op. 6</i>

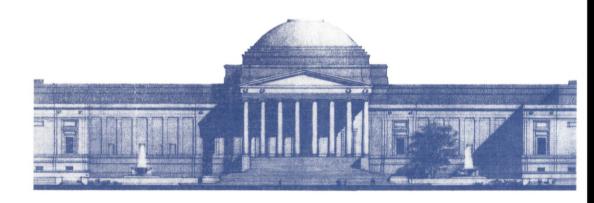
The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

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**



2453d Concert

# RALPH VOTAPEK, pianist

Sunday Evening, 30 March 2003 Seven O'clock West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

### Program

# Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Twenty-four Preludes in Two Books (1894)

#### Book I

- 1. Danseuses de Delphes
- 2. Voiles
- 3. Le vent dans la plaine
- 4. Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir
- 5. Les collines d'Anacapri
- 6. Des pas sur la neige
- 7. Ce qu'a vu le vent d'ouest
- 8. La fille aux cheveux de lin
- 9. La sérénade interrompue
- 10. La cathédrale engloutie
- 11. La danse de Puck
- 12. Minstrels

#### Intermission

#### Book II

- 1. Brouillards
- 2. Feuilles mortes
- 3. La Puerta del Vino
- 4. Les fées sont d'exquises danseuses
- 5. Bruyère
- 6. General Lavine—Eccentric
- 7. La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune
- 8. Ondine
- 9. Hommage à S. Pickwick, Esq., P.P.M.P.C.
- 10. Canope
- 11. Les tierces alternées
- 12. Feux d'artifice

#### The Musician

Ralph Votapek's early triumphs as a winner of two prestigious competitions, the Naumburg and the first Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, were an auspicious prelude to an even more remarkable career. His compelling keyboard style embodies the best in twentieth-century piano traditions, combining the fire, poetry, and tonal warmth of the grand-manner prewar era with the modern virtues of fastidious clarity and electrifying rhythmic flair.

Ralph Votapek has made hundreds of appearances with major orchestras under such legendary conductors as Rafael Kubelik, William Steinberg, Joseph Krips, and Erich Leinsdorf. Featured no less than sixteen times as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's guest soloist, he has frequently played with the Boston Pops, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Pittsburgh Symphony, the San Francisco Symphony, the National Symphony, and leading orchestras in Saint Louis, Houston, Dallas, Louisville, and elsewhere.

With concerto appearances abroad including London, Lisbon, Saint Petersburg, and the Far East, Votapek has made a special commitment to Latin America, where he has toured every other year for three decades, performing in Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Asunción, Montevideo, São Paulo, Caracas, Santiago, and numerous smaller cities. In June 2000 he completed his nineteenth concert tour of South America. He is equally familiar as a solo recitalist throughout four continents. His guest appearances with the Juilliard String Quartet, the Fine Arts Quartet, and the New World Quartet are highlights of his extensive chamber music experience. The PBS network and other educational stations draw frequently on his video series of forty recitals for broadcast throughout the United States.

Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Votapek began his musical education at age nine, when he was enrolled in the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music. He continued his studies at Northwestern University, the Manhattan School of Music, and Juilliard, where his principal teachers were Rosina Lhévinne and Robert Goldsand.

Ralph Votapek has recorded for the RCA, London, Cambridge, CRI, Music and Arts, Mace, Grenadilla, Concert Disc, EDUL, and Audio Arts labels. He was the soloist on Arthur Fiedler's last Boston Pops recording, a Gershwin program re-released on CD by Pickwick. His most recent CD for Ivory Classics features the music of Ginastera, Szymanowski, Poulenc, and Piazzolla.

Presently serving as artist-in-residence at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Ralph Votapek appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Parsons Artists Management of Highland Park, Illinois.

# **Program Notes**

#### Book I

- 1. Danseuses de Delphes (Delphic Dancers): As the title implies, is a religious dance of the sort performed during rites in the Temple of Apollo at Delphi [in Greece]. The music is slow, stately, and tranquil with harmonies evocative of mystery. 2. Voiles: This title may be translated either as "veils" or "sails," but Debussy probably had in mind a seascape. With the exception of six bars of pentatonic harmony, the prelude is based on the whole-tone scale. 3. Le vent dans la plaine (The Wind in the Plain): The music suggests a strong breeze, rather than a mighty wind. The listener may visualize tall grass dancing about on the plain. 4. Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir (Sounds and Perfumes Swirl in the Evening Air): This title is a quotation from a poem in Baudelaire's Les fleurs du mal. The poet speaks of the senses drinking in the sounds and odors of evening. Debussy's harmonies evoke the perfumes of the night.
- 5. Les collines d'Anacapri (The Hills of Anacapri): Anacapri is one of the two villages on the island of Capri in the Bay of Naples. From a distance, one hears cowbells and the strains of a tarantella. The dance tune becomes more prominent and soon we hear a Neapolitan-style

melody. A second folklike theme is introduced in the middle section. A reminiscence of the opening dance leads to a brilliant ending. 6. *Des pas sur la neige (Footprints in the Snow)*: Footprints in the snow are clues to a mysterious and seemingly endless journey. A persistent figure in the accompaniment creates an impression of weariness. According to the composer, the dominant rhythm "should have the sonorous value of a melancholy ice-bound landscape." The mood here is one of extreme solitude. One feels a spiritual numbness. 7. *Ce qu'a vu le vent d'ouest (What the West Wind Saw)* is a musical picture of a storm at sea, or perhaps a storm coming off the sea, in this case, of course, the Atlantic.

8. La fille aux cheveux de lin (The Girl with the Flaxen Hair): The title of this well-known piece is that of a poem by Leconte de Lisle [from his collection of poems, Chansons ecossaises]. The Girl with the Flaxen Hair displays a simple lyricism that recalls an earlier stage in the composer's career. De Lisle's poem is the song of a young Scottish girl singing in the morning sunshine. 9. La sérénade interrompue (The Interrupted Serenade) is a Spanish-style serenade with a guitarlike accompaniment. The timid serenader is twice interrupted, once by a slammed window and again by the sound of distant merrymaking. The second interruption sparks a display of rage. The singer finishes his song sadly and departs indifferently. 10. La cathédrale engloutie (The Sunken Cathedral) is a musical picture of the submerged cathedral of Ys, which, according to legend, sank off the coast of Brittany as punishment for the sins of the populace. It rises to the surface occasionally as a warning symbol. The piece begins calmly as submerged bells become louder, and we hear the sound of plainchant and the boom of the organ pedal. Gradually, the cathedral disappears from view and the ghostly sounds grow fainter. 11. Dance de Puck (Puck's Dance): Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream inspired this whimsical piece. Puck leaps about gleefully, then stops at the sound of an elfin horn. At the end he vanishes in a puff of smoke. 12. Minstrels: In this hilarious piece, Debussy recalls the music hall acts that were popular early in the twentieth century. There are passing references to dance routines and comical stunts. Instrumental effects include those of a banjo, a drum, and an out-of-tune cornet.

#### Book II

- 1. Brouillards (Mists): The effect of mist is produced by one hand playing exclusively on the white keys while the other controls the black keys. 2. Feuilles mortes (Dead Leaves): The impression here is autumnal [and tinged with] melancholy, yet beautiful with Debussy's chords of the ninth and eleventh. 3. La Puerta del Vino (The Wine Gate) can be politely translated as the Gateway to the Vineyard. However, the music is more suggestive of a gateway to drunkenness. Actually, the title is the name of a café in Spain that Debussy saw on a postcard. The rhythm is that of an incessant Habanera. 4. Les fées sont d'exquises danseuses (Fairies are Exquisite Dancers): This piece is light and airy, but one doesn't have to wait long for unexpected harmonic and tempo changes.
- 5. Bruyéres (Heather or Heaths) bears some similarity in form and mood to The Girl with the Flaxen Hair. Its pastoral quality reminds of a Scottish landscape. 6. General Lavine—Eccentric: This personage was an old American soldier, a real character in Parisian vaudeville, whose act consisted solely of marching stiffly around the stage with his rifle. He was billed as one who had soldiered all his life. 7. La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune (The Terrace for Audiences of the Moonlight) evokes mysterious India, as one imagines a vast crowd hypnotized by the moon. 8. Ondine: Debussy's water sprite is not as brilliant or as serious as Ravel's, but it nevertheless playfully splashes about.
- 9. Hommage à S. Pickwick, Esq., P.P.M.P.C.: After a blatant quote of God Save the Queen, Debussy gently pokes fun at this proper English gentleman. Toward the end he goes off whistling a happy tune. 10. Canope: Quiet parallel chords evoke the distant star, Canopus.
- 11. Les tierces alternées (Alternating Thirds) is certainly the most abstract of the Twenty-four Preludes. In the consistent pursuit of its technical aim, [this work] could easily have been included in the set of etudes that Debussy was to write a few years later. 12. Feux d'artifice

(*Fireworks*): Debussy's fireworks at first only pop and fizzle, but soon there are much more brilliant displays, culminating in a furious double glissando. However, the end is quiet with a snatch of the *Marseillaise*.

Program notes by Ralph Votapek, edited and adapted by Elmer Booze

# **Concerts at the National Gallery of Art**

Under the direction of George Manos

### Concerts in April and May 2003

#### **April**

6 Louis Lortie, *pianist*Presented in honor of
the exhibition *Frederic* 

the exhibition Frederic Remington: The Color

of Night

Schumann: Frühlingsnacht Phantasiestücke, Op. 111 Liszt: Transcendental Etudes

Nos. 5 and 6

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 9

Carnaval de Pest

Elliott Carter: *Night Fantasies*Ravel: *Gaspard de la nuit* 

13 Valerie Tryon, pianist

Presented in honor of the exhibition *Frederic Remington: The Color* 

of Night

Chopin: Two Nocturnes Liszt: Harmonies du soir

Granados: *The Lover and the* 

Nightingale

Poulenc: Three Nocturnes

# 20 No concert