

partner, the tenor Peter Pears. Honors bestowed on Britten include Britain's Companion of Honour in 1953, Order of Merit in 1965, and life peerage in June 1976.

Programs notes by Elmer Booze

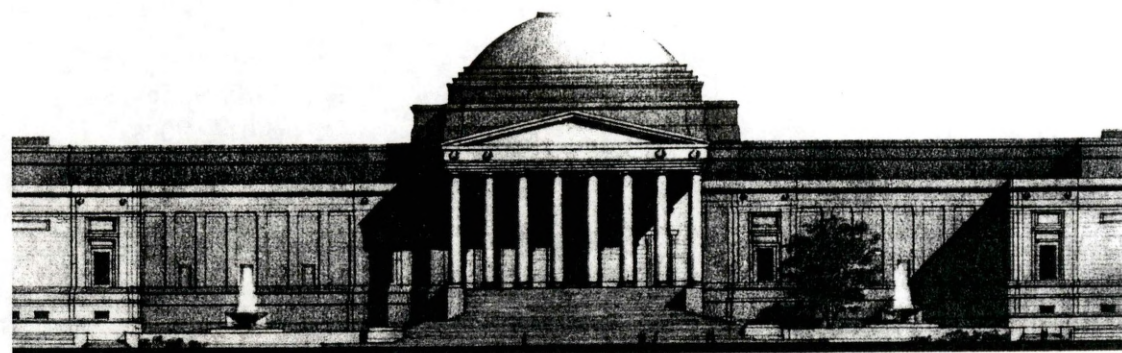
The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electric devices are turned off.

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

The Sixty-second Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2472d Concert

BEVERLY BENSO, *contralto*

PHILLIP SILVER, *pianist*

Presented in honor of the 25th anniversary of the East Building
of the National Gallery of Art

Sunday Evening, 16 November 2003
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

I

George Manos

German Songs
(1949)

Frühlingsgruß
Ruhe, meine Seele
Die Post

Anton Webern
(1883–1945)

Eight Early Songs
(1901–1904)

Tief von fern
Aufblick
Blumengruß
Bild der Liebe
Sommerabend
Heiter
Der Tod
Heimgang in der Frühe

Beverly Benso and Phillip Silver

II

Franz Schreker
(1878–1934)

Waldszene, *from* Der ferne Klang

Ervin Schulhoff
(1894–1942)

Boston, *from* Partita für Klavier

Phillip Silver

III

Francis Poulenc
(1899–1963)

La fraîcheur et le feu
(1950)

Rayons des yeux
Le matin les branches attendent
Tout disparut
Dans les ténèbres du jardin
Unis la fraîcheur et le feu
Homme au sourire tendre
La grande rivière qui va

Intermission

IV

Mark Fax
(1911–1974)

Five Black Songs to Poems by Jo Ann Harris

Love
The Refused
Only Dreams
Selfishness
Advice to a Child

George Manos

Kykleion Asma
(1952)

Morning
Noon
Twilight
Night
Interlinear

Benjamin Britten
(1913–1976)

A Cradle Song
The Highland Balou
Sephestia's Lullaby
A Charm
The Nurse's Song

A Charm of Lullabies
(1947)

The Musicians

American contralto **Beverly Benso** is well known in Washington as a uniquely gifted singer in her range. She has carried that reputation to all parts of the world through her appearances as a recitalist and oratorio soloist in Germany, Denmark, and Serbia (the former Yugoslavia), and at the Salzburg Festival in Austria. Benso has also sung at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina, the Mahler Festival in Canada, the Phillips Collection, the Cosmos Club, the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of Congress, and many colleges and universities. She has been a frequent guest soloist with the National Gallery Orchestra under the direction of George Manos, performing *Kindertotenlieder* by Gustav Mahler, Johannes Brahms' *Alto Rhapsody*, Sir Edward Elgar's *Sea Pictures*, and Richard Bales' *A Set of Jade*. Having made her Carnegie Hall debut in 1990, Beverly Benso is a frequent soloist in oratorio performances throughout the United States and abroad. Her twenty-five-year collaboration with the Washington Bach Consort has included concerts in Leipzig and Halle, Germany, celebrating the 300th anniversary of the birth of Johann Sebastian Bach.

A chamber music enthusiast, Benso is a founding member of the National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble. With this ensemble she performed in twenty-three concerts at the National Gallery as well as at the Rheingau Festival in Germany, the Musée du Louvre in Paris, and Schloss Belvedere in Vienna, Austria. Her recordings include *Four Centuries of Song* and *Gentle Annie* on the Koch label. She has served on the faculties of the Peabody Conservatory and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Pianist **Phillip Silver** is an internationally acclaimed performer, with enthusiastic reviews to his credit in newspapers from Europe, Asia, and the United States. The *Frankfurter Rundschau* described his playing as "virtuosic." *HaAretz* commented upon his "superb technical ability that enthralled the audience with melody, lyricism and poetry." *The Boston Globe* called him "an international collaborative pianist of the first rank," and the *Jerusalem Post* described him as "a superb accompanist whose work is marked by sensitivity, felicity of style, and an inborn musicianship [that] unerringly directs him to the most appropriate musical gesture."

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Silver studied with Katja Andy and Leonard Shure at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, earning the bachelor and master of music degrees, cum laude. He has the doctor of musical arts degree from the University of Washington, where his area of research was the music of Ignaz Moscheles. Since the mid-1990s, Phillip Silver has carried out extensive research on music and musicians caught up in the Holocaust. Prior to joining the faculty of the School of Performing Arts at the University of Maine in Orono, he was a member of the music faculties of Glasgow University, Strathclyde University, and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow.

Program Notes

Conductor, composer, and pianist George Manos has been director of music at the National Gallery of Art and conductor of the National Gallery Orchestra since 1985. He is also artistic director of the American Music Festival and the National Gallery vocal and chamber ensembles, which he founded. Manos' career as a performing pianist and teacher has included several years on the faculty of The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, where he taught piano, conducting, and chamber music. Manos founded and directed for ten years the renowned Kilarney Bach Festival in the Republic of Ireland and was the music director of the 1992 Scandinavian Music Festival in Kolding, Denmark. His compositions include a *Missa brevis* for choir and chamber orchestra, settings of the Greek Orthodox sacred liturgy, and numerous songs for solo voice.

Anton Webern was the first composer who was trained as a musicologist, earning a doctorate in musicology in 1906 from the University of Vienna, the city of his birth. His professor there was the outstanding Austrian musicologist Guido Adler (1855-1941), and his thesis was on the *Choralis Constantinus* of the Flemish composer Heinrich Isaac (1450-1517). In 1904 Webern met his mentor-to-be, the Austrian-American composer Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951), and began taking lessons with him as his first student. Webern's musical life was greatly influenced by Schoenberg's teaching and friendship and by his association with Schoenberg's other greatly talented pupil, Alban Berg (1885-1935). The close collaboration of the three men lasted from 1906 to 1912, during which time they introduced a new musical system centered around Schoenberg's use of a twelve-tone row. It was a period of musical experimentation that eschewed the contour of the traditional melodic line as well as the harmonic sequence of tonic, subdominant, and dominant progressions in favor of atonal relationships. Webern's musical oeuvre is relatively small, consisting of only thirty-one original works, but it presents the twelve-tone compositional technique thoroughly and skillfully.

Francis Poulenc, a native of Paris, was a member of Les Six, six French composers who were grouped together in the second decade of the twentieth century by the French pianist and music critic Henri Collet. (The other five composers in the group were Georges Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, and Germaine Tailleferre.) Poulenc studied piano in his youth with the Spanish pianist Ricardo Viñes (1875-1943), but in composition he was basically self-taught. His first successful composition was the *Rapsodie nègre*, published in 1919. He was already accepted as a composer by the wider public when he undertook formal lessons in composition from 1921 to 1924 with the French composer and teacher Charles Koechlin (1867-1950). Poulenc also enjoyed high respect as a pianist and accompanist. He undertook extensive tours with his friend, the noted baritone Pierre Bernac (1899-1979), for whom he composed many of his songs.

Composer Mark Fax, who was born in Baltimore, Maryland, began his early music studies at age nine and by the age of fourteen was a theater organist in Baltimore's Regent Theater. His undergraduate studies took place at Syracuse University, where he received the bachelor of music degree with honors. He attended the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, where he received the master of music degree in 1945. At Eastman he was a composition student of Howard Hanson (1896-1981), who was also the teacher of the first National Gallery music director, Richard Bales. Fax also studied under Bernard Rogers (1893-1968), whose students included, among others, Vladimir Ussachevsky (1911-1990), Peter Mennin (1923-1983), Dominick Argento (b. 1927), and David Diamond (b. 1915). Fax's piano teacher at Eastman was Cecile Staub Genhart (1898-1983), who was actively teaching up to the year of her death. Fax continued his studies toward a doctorate at New York University from 1945 to 1946. His musical career included positions as organist, teacher, administrator, and composer. A Fellow of the American Guild of Organists, he was the organist and choir director at several churches in the Washington area, with his longest tenure at Asbury United Methodist Church (1951-1974). His long and productive career as a teacher took him to many colleges in the South, culminating at Howard University (1947-1973), where he taught music theory before assuming the position of director of the School of Music in 1972. Fax wrote in all genres of music, ranging from piano pieces to two full-length operas, *Christmas Miracle* (1958) and *Till Victory Is Won* (1967). Among his honors and awards were a Rosenwald Fellowship and membership in the All-University Honor Society.

Benjamin Britten, a native of Lowestoft, Suffolk, England, is considered the leading British composer of the mid-twentieth century. A brilliant composer of operas, he was also regarded as a first-rate pianist and conductor. Britten studied at the Royal College of Music in London with British composers Frank Bridge (1879-1941) and John Ireland (1879-1961) as well as the Australian pianist, teacher, and composer Arthur Benjamin (1893-1960). As a composer of song cycles, Britten reached his peak with *Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo* (1940) and *The Holy Sonnets of John Donne* (1945), written for his friend and recital