a masterpiece of musical endeavor, but also the most important piano concerto to come from the pen of an American composer to date. The work was given its premiere on 12 February 1924 at Aeolian Hall in New York City. The American conductor extraordinaire Paul Whiteman (1890-1967), who commissioned the work and to whom it was dedicated, led the first performance. The score was orchestrated from Gershwin's original two-piano version by Ferde Grofé (1892–1972), the American composer and pianist who was Whiteman's principal arranger. Not all of the reviews following the premiere were favorable, but several of the critics who recognized the work's intrinsic value voiced their enthusiastic approval. One New York critic wrote: "Then came a number on the program that established what many of us suspected before, that George Gershwin is the most promising figure in popular music today. Certainly his Rhapsody in Blue broke ground in a new field. He has written, out of original and distinctive material, and using popular American rhythms and harmonies, a piano concerto that has strength and structure. The rhapsody is different [from] anything you have ever heard in popular or classical music, yet it is not 'freak' music. It has form. beauty, [and] meaning." The piano solo version of the Rhapsody was published in 1927 by New World Music Corporation.

Program 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 electronic devices are turned off.

## The Sixty-second Season of

# THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

#### **National Gallery of Art**



2484th Concert

## FREDERICK MOYER, pianist

Sunday Evening, 8 February 2004 Seven O'clock West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

### Program

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Prelude from Violin Partita No. 3 in E Major, BWV 1006 arranged for piano by Sergei Rachmaninoff

Anton Arensky (1861–1906)

Selections from Twenty-four Characteristic Pieces, op. 36 (1894)

No. 1: Prelude in C Major
No. 2: "The Top" (C minor)
No. 9: "Butterfly" (E major)
No. 11: "Barcarolle" (F major)
No. 12: Intermezzo in F Minor

No. 14: Scherzino in F-sharp Minor
No. 15: "The Brook in the Forest"
(G major)
No. 18: "Apprehension"
(A-flat major)

No. 13: Etude in F-sharp Major

No. 24: "In the Fields" (B Minor)

#### Intermission

Donal Fox (b. 1955)

Piano Etudes (2000–2002)

Velocity Runs Rhythm Primitive Toccata on Bach

Washington Premiere Performance

George Gershwin (1898–1937)

Rhapsody in Blue (Solo piano version 1924)

#### The Musician

"The playing of [Frederick] Mover is technically strong and extraordinarily clear and precise in articulation. He is clearly a pianist of sensitivity and musical intelligence" (The Cleveland Plain Dealer). Such unbridled praise is typical of the enthusiastic reviews pianist Frederick Mover has received during his long concert career. A full-time concert pianist for more than twenty years, he has concertized in such far-flung venues as Suntory Hall in Tokyo, the Sydney Opera House, and Windsor Castle. In addition to his 1998 and 1993 appearances at the National Gallery, he has performed in Carnegie Recital Hall, the Berkshire Festival on the Tanglewood estate in Massachusetts, and the Kennedy Center. He has appeared as piano soloist with world-renowned orchestras, including the Cleveland, Philadelphia, Minnesota, St. Louis, and Dallas Symphony Orchestras. In Europe and the Far East, he has performed with the London, Netherlands Radio, Latvian, Iceland, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan Philharmonic Orchestras as well as the major orchestras of Australia.

Moyer's eighteen recordings on the Biddulph, GM, and JRI labels contain works by more than thirty composers and reflect his affinity for a wide variety of styles. Recent recordings include the complete *Estudos* of Brazilian composer Camargo Guarnieri, a collection of works by Chopin, Richard Strauss' *Enoch Arden* (with speaker Benjamin Luxon), and David Ott's *Second Piano Concerto* (commissioned by Moyer) with the London Symphony. Many other composers have written works for Moyer, including Louis Calabro, Donal Fox, Kenneth Frazelle, Gordon Green, David Kechley, Ned Rorem, Andersen Viana, and the 1996 Pulitzer Prize-winning composer George Walker, whose *Piano Sonata No. 4* was commissioned and recorded by Moyer in 1986.

# **Program Notes**

The *Prelude in E Major* from Bach's *Violin Partita, BWV 1006*, is one of a number of works Rachmaninoff transcribed after emigrating from Russia to America via Germany and Switzerland. Rachmaninoff's

reputation as a composer and pianist had already been firmly established in America by his debut performance in 1909 in New York, at which he played both his second and third piano concertos. However, he was well aware that he had to transform himself into a superstar virtuoso in order to make a profitable living as a pianist. To supplement his solo repertoire, Rachmaninoff turned to the art of the transcription, and his experiments in this genre proved to be paragons of the art. His nine transcriptions for solo piano are bold, brilliant, and full of virtuosity. At the same time they deftly unleash the spectrum of human emotions. The effective performance of these transcriptions as well as many of Rachmaninoff's other compositions requires an Olympic technique. The Bach *Prelude*, as he transcribed it, remains close to the original version, using the high register of the keyboard to imitate the violin in nonstop perpetual motion, and it retains the striking polyphonic clarity that is a hallmark of Bach's genius.

Anton Arensky composed Twenty-four Characteristic Pieces, op. 36, in 1894 during a recuperative sojourn in the Caucasus, a region between the Black and Caspian Seas on the dividing line between Europe and Asia. Although they are not designated as such, these twenty-four pieces are believed to have been inspired by Johann Sebastian Bach's preludes and fugues from The Well-Tempered Clavier, particularly in their key relationships, beginning in C major and ending twenty-four preludes later in the chromatically distant key of B minor. Arensky's suggestive subtitles add an element of allure and complement the use of the word "characteristic" in the title of the set. In the liner notes accompanying the first recording of the complete Characteristic Pieces (by pianist Anatoly Sheludiakov, [Moscow, 2002]), a former pupil of Arensky, Alexander Goldenweiser (1875-1961), is quoted: "It is my opinion that in this large-scale work Arensky placed all of his intellect, like a dictionary defining his poetics and aesthetic." Frederick Moyer has selected ten of the twenty-four pieces for this program for their musical and technical challenge as well as their lasting expressive qualities.

Internationally acclaimed as a composer, pianist, and improviser in both the jazz and classical fields, Donal Fox has garnered numerous awards, among which are a 1997 Guggenheim Fellowship in music composition and a 1998 Fellowship from the Boglaisco Foundation (Italy). Two of his most recent commissions have come from the Westdeutscher Rundfunk Köln and the Paris New Music Review. During the 1991-1992 concert season, Fox served as composer-in-residence with the St. Louis Symphony under then music director Leonard Slatkin. He maintains an active schedule as a concert pianist, performing with the Richmond Symphony and playing solo recitals at Merkin Concert Hall in New York City. Donal Fox has made several appearances on National Public Radio and public television programs, such as JazzSets, hosted by Branford Marsalis; The Connection, with BBC host Judy Swallow; and Say, Brother. He has recorded as composer and pianist for New World Records, Evidence Records, Music & Arts, Yamaha's Original Series, and Wergo Records.

Fox has provided his Piano Etudes, written on a Guggenheim Foundation commission, with the following commentary: "The three etudes (Études de concert) composed for Frederick Moyer (a complete set will be eventually written for him)-Velocity Runs, Rhythm Primitive, and Toccata on Bach-are Washington, D.C., premieres. Each etude, by definition, is a study that explores a different technical or musical problem for the pianist. Velocity Runs, as indicated by its title, deals with colorful and powerful fleeting scalar runs up and down the keyboard that eventually thin out into a hammering two-handed trill. Rhythm Primitive explores screaming, unrelenting chords, and hairpin rhythmical attacks. Toccata on Bach is a jazzy essay based on the last movement of the Bach Toccata in E Minor, BWV 914. The toccata, like the etudes, requires brilliant technical execution. Almost all of the notes for Toccata on Bach are derived in some way or another-transposition, augmentation, inversion, etc.-from the Bach work." These contrapuntal devices are also known as devices of figure treatment.

When Gershwin completed his *Rhapsody in Blue* for piano and jazz band in 1923, he had no inkling of the extent to which it would influence the subsequent development of American music. It is not only