

For the convenience of concertgoers  
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

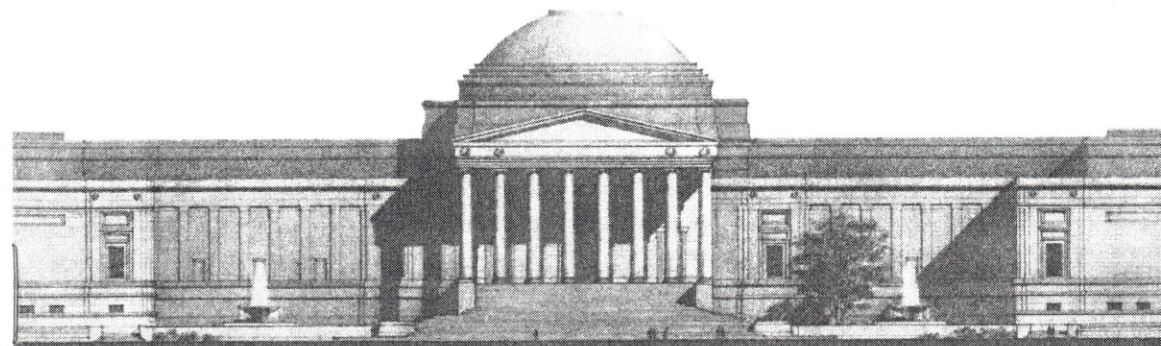
The use of cameras or recording equipment during the  
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,  
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of  
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

Music Department  
National Gallery of Art  
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC

*Mailing address*  
2000B South Club Drive  
Landover, MD 20785

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The Sixty-fifth Season of  
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin  
**Concerts**

“Sixty-five, but not retiring”

National Gallery of Art  
2,587th Concert

Louis Lortie, *pianist*

October 8, 2006  
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm  
West Building, West Garden Court

*Admission free*

*The Fazioli piano used in this performance  
was provided by The Piano Company of Leesburg, Virginia.*

Program

Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

*Tannhäuser Overture* (1849)

Transcribed for piano solo by Franz Liszt (1811–1886)

Thomas Adès (b. 1971)

*Darkness Visible* (1992)

Franz Liszt

*Vallée d'Obermann* from *Années de pèlerinage*, Volume 1 (c. 1848)

**INTERMISSION**

Thomas Adès

*Traced Overhead* (1996)

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

*Nocturne in B Major*, op. 32, no. 1 (1836/1837)

Frédéric Chopin

*Sonata in B Minor*, op. 58 (1844)

Allegro maestoso

Scherzo

Largo

Finale: Presto, non tanto

## The Musicians

Canadian pianist Louis Lortie has been praised for the fresh perspective and individuality he brings to his broad repertoire. He has presented the complete works of Ravel in London and Montreal for the BBC and the CBC, respectively, and in the 2005–2006 season, completed a Liszt/Wagner series in Florence, Italy, and in London's Wigmore Hall. Lortie has recently performed at the London Proms at Lincoln Center, at Carnegie Hall, and with conductor Charles Dutoit and the New York Philharmonic. Although he is known for his interpretations of Chopin's works, he also performs the works of a number of contemporary composers, including Adès, Elliott Carter, and György Kurtág.

Born in Montreal, Lortie made his debut with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra at age thirteen and performed with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra three years later, which resulted in an engagement for a historic tour of the People's Republic of China and Japan. He has made more than thirty recordings on the Chandos label, including the recently released *To the Distant Beloved*, which includes works by Beethoven, Liszt, and Schumann, and a recording of Franck's *Symphonic Variations* with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. Louis Lortie appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Seldy Cramer Artists of Lafayette, California.

## Program Notes

When Richard Wagner and Franz Liszt met in Weimar in 1849, Wagner was fleeing a warrant for his arrest in Dresden, and Liszt, retired from the concert stage, was dedicating his time to composing. During the three short days of this first meeting, they discussed music and art and confirmed mutual admiration for each other as musicians. Liszt subsequently became Wagner's most ardent fan, championing his music whenever he had the opportunity. Before their meeting, Liszt had transcribed the works of many composers, but he developed his ability to accurately reproduce the orchestral color of the original composition on the piano in transcribing Wagner's works. Liszt's version of the *Tannhäuser Overture*, completed in 1849, is a brilliant example. Extremely virtuosic and technically challenging in every way, the work captures the sound of the strings ingeniously, and the bell-like octaves in the coda bring it to an exciting conclusion.

Born in London in 1971, Thomas Adès has enjoyed a meteoric rise to international musical prominence. He began his career as a pianist and has expanded his accomplishments to include conducting and composing, for which he has received widespread acclaim. Heavily influenced by those who came before him, Adès has a gift for paying homage to the great composers in a modern, personal way. *Darkness Visible* is, in Adès's own words, "an explosion of John Dowland's lute song of 1610, *In Darkness Let Mee Dwell*." Filled with contrasts, dynamically and texturally, this remarkable piece covers the entire range of the keyboard. Adès gave the first performance of *Darkness Visible* in the recital hall in Liszt's house in Budapest.

Liszt's original compositions include a three-book collection entitled *Années de pèlerinage* (Years of Pilgrimage). The first volume of these lyrical expressions of nature and art was inspired by his travels in Switzerland. *Vallée d'Obermann*, the longest piece in the volume, represents a transcendental experience described in the novel *Obermann* by Étienne Pivert de Senancour (1770–1846). Liszt opens with a melancholy theme that is transformed over three sections to a brighter finish, evoking not only a place but also a character, and his philosophical triumph over misfortune.



Commissioned by and composed for pianist Imogen Cooper (b. 1949), Adès's *Traced Overhead* is a relatively short work, consisting of three linked movements: *Sursum*, *Aetheria*, and *Chori*. The composer notes: "Imagine a recording device sent up into space, then making a transcription of the data it brought back, in the form of sounds heard above our heads. The three pieces that make up the work describe a journey of increasing distance from earth, and, accordingly, of drastically increasing perceptual length." Adès gave the American premiere of *Traced Overhead* in March 1997 in Los Angeles.

The fundamental texture throughout the works of Frédéric Chopin, whose compositions are perhaps the most frequently performed in the canon of piano literature, is accompanied melody. His nocturnes may offer the clearest example, with melodies distinctly isolated in the right hand and rolling arpeggiated harmonies in the left. Though the form is attributed to Irish composer John Field (1782–1837), Chopin's "night pieces" are more widely recognized, and they are far more expressive and introspective than those of Field. They are often compared to the cavatinas of Vincenzo Bellini (1801–1835) and other early nineteenth-century Italian opera composers. The *Nocturne in B Major*, op. 32, no. 1, written toward the end of Chopin's life, shows his development of the style to increasingly incorporate counter-melodies, inner voices, and rhythmic interest without sacrificing brilliant creativity in the melodic writing and embellishment.

Of the three sonatas by Chopin, the third, op. 58, adheres most closely to the classic sonata form. Though he preferred dance-based and freer fantasy pieces (such as ballades and scherzos) to the strict form of the sonata, Chopin successfully unified the four movements to form a cohesive work. In the opening *Allegro maestoso* he presents two contrasting themes, with a dense development unfolding into a straightforward recapitulation. The second and third movements are subtly connected; the rhythm at the end of the *Scherzo* is distorted to form the introduction of the *Largo*, which is written in song form. Finally, the tranquility of the third movement is abruptly interrupted by the opening of the fourth movement (*Finale: Presto, non tanto*), a vigorous, rhythmic rondo.

*Program notes by Danielle DeSwert*