



The Sixty-third Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,541st Concert

National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble
Rosa Lamoreaux, artistic director

June 26, 2005
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Johannes Brahms (1833–1987)

Four Songs op. 17 (1859–1860)

For women's chorus, two horns, and harp

Es tönt ein voller Harfenklang

Lied von Shakespeare

Der Gärtner

Gesang aus "Fingal"

Brahms

Liebeslieder op. 52 (1868–1869)

For four voices and piano four hands

Rede, Mädchen, allzu liebes

Am Gesteine rauscht die Flut

O die Frauen

Wie des Abends schöne Röte

Die grüne Hopfenranke

Ein kleiner, hübscher Vogel

Wohl schön bewandt war es

Wenn so lind dein Auge mir

Am Donaustrande

O wie sanft die Quelle

Nein, es ist nicht auszukommen

Schlosser auf, und mache Schlösser

Vögelein durchrauscht die Luft

Sieh, wie ist die Welle klar

Nachtigall, sie singt so schön

Ein dunkeler Schacht ist Liebe

Nicht wandle, mein Licht

Es bebet das Gesträuche

INTERMISSION

Ned Rorem (b. 1923)

From an Unknown Past (1953)

Seven settings of poetry from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

The Lover in Winter Plaineth for the Spring

Hey Nonny No

My Blood So Red

Suspiria

The Miracle

Tears

Crabbed Age and Youth

Judith Weir (b. 1954)

Don't Let That Horse (1990)

James Quitman Mulholland

How Do I Love Thee (1995)

(Text by Elizabeth Barrett Browning)

John Gardner (b. 1917)

Seven Songs op. 36 (1957)

Hark! Hark! The Lark (Shakespeare)

Crabbed Age and Youth (attributed to Shakespeare)

Gather Ye Rosebuds (Herrick)

Fear No More the Heat o' the Sun (Shakespeare)

Under the Greenwood Tree (Shakespeare)

It Is Not Growing Like a Tree (Jonson)

How Happy Is He Born and Taught (Wotton)

Featured Musicians

This concert is the third appearance by the National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble in its reconstituted form as a chamber choir. Its debut performance was a presentation of nineteenth-century vocal chamber music in honor of the exhibition *All the Mighty World: The Photographs of Roger Fenton, 1852–1860*. In February 2005 the ensemble presented the *St. Matthew Passion* by Johann Theile (1646–1724) in honor of the exhibition *Rembrandt's Late Religious Portraits*. For this concert, the ensemble's artistic director, Rosa Lamoreaux, has chosen a mix of established repertoire for chamber choir, such as the Brahms *Liebeslieder* waltzes, and works that are probably being heard for the first time by most members of the audience, such as the songs by Judith Weir and James Quitman Mulholland.

The singers participating in this concert are sopranos Rosa Lamoreaux and Gisele Becker, altos Barbara Hollinshead and Roger O. Isaacs, tenors Gary Glick and Robert Petillo, and basses Bobb Robinson and K. C. Armstrong. Instrumental accompaniment is provided by Laurel Ohlson and Kristin Davidson, French horn, Dotian Levalier, harp, and Bradford and Maribeth Gowen, piano.

Program Notes

Brahms's *Four Songs* op. 17 is scored for three-part women's voices (SSA), two horns, and harp. In *Es tönt ein voller Harfenklang* (*A Full Sound of the Harp Is Heard*), the scoring for the harp embodies the lines from the text: "Deep and quivering, they pierce my heart, /And leave my eyes o'er flowing." *Come Away, Death*, from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, beguiles the listener even as the poet is beguiled by his morbidly humorous thoughts. *Der Gärtner* (*The Gardener*) is a tribute to the love of nature, with a second meaning that speaks of the temporality of all life. In the spirit of romanticism, the music combines starkly and tragically with the strangely dark words. The *Gesang aus "Fingal"* (*Song from "Fingal"*) is a Hebridean evocation in Gothic style, attributed to the "legendary bard" Ossian, who is actually a creation of the Scottish poet James MacPherson.

Brahms's *Liebeslieder* op. 52 (*Love Songs*) are unique in nineteenth-century chamber music in their scoring—a musical sextet for soprano, alto, tenor, bass, and two pianists. Brahms originally conceived the set of eighteen waltzes for performance by a solo vocal quartet. Even when performed by a larger ensemble, they require clear German diction, effortless breathing, easy transitions from legato to staccato, and a wide range of emotions from the singers.

Words and music are inextricably linked for Ned Rorem. *Time* magazine has called him "the world's best composer of art songs." He is also the author of fourteen books, including five volumes of diaries and collections of lectures and criticism. About his experience as a composer, Rorem writes: "My music is a diary no less compromising than my prose. A diary nevertheless differs from a musical composition in that it depicts the moment, the writer's present mood, which, were it inscribed an hour later, could emerge quite otherwise. I don't believe that composers notate their

moods, they don't tell the music where to go—it leads them...Why do I write music? Because I want to hear it—it's simple as that. Others may have more talent, more sense of duty. But I compose just from necessity, and no one else is making what I need.”

Judith Weir is one of Britain's most wide-ranging and prolific composers working today. She studied composition with John Tavener and Robin Holloway and later taught composition at Glasgow University, Oxford, and Princeton. Her interest in theater, narrative, and folklore has resulted in three full-length operas, *A Night at the Chinese Opera*, *The Vanishing Bridegroom*, and *Blond Eckbert*, all of which have been televised and widely performed in the United Kingdom and Germany. Works Weir has composed for specific artists include *woman.life.song*, a song cycle commissioned and performed by Jessye Norman in Carnegie Hall and at the BBC Proms; *We Are Shadows*, written for Sir Simon Rattle and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and its three choruses; and an extended series of chamber works for the composer's longtime collaborators, the Schubert Ensemble.

James Quitman Mulholland is a professor of music at Butler University in Indianapolis and was the director of music at First-Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church there. A graduate of Louisiana State University, he completed the doctor of musical arts degree in performance and literature at the University of Indiana. His compositions are included in the required repertoire on more than forty state high school choral lists and have been performed at the last four national conventions of the American Choral Directors Association. Some of Mulholland's works have become standard repertoire for children's choirs throughout the country, and others are in the libraries of many collegiate and professional ensembles.

John Gardner was born in Manchester, England, and spent his childhood in Ilfracombe on the Devonshire coast, where for three generations his family had practiced medicine. He began to learn the piano from age five and later took up the cello. He was educated at Exeter College, Oxford, where he was the Sir Hubert Parry organ scholar. Among the Oxford professors who greatly influenced Gardner was the aesthetic historian and philosopher Theodor W. Adorno, who had studied composition with both Schoenberg and Webern. From 1952 to 1976 Gardner conducted the choir and taught music appreciation at Morley College in London, succeeding in that post such adventurous teachers and composers as Gustav Holst, Michael Tippett, and Mátyás Seiber. This experience further enhanced Gardner's innate ability to compose for voices. His works for that medium include, in addition to *Seven Songs* op. 36, the cantata *Cantiones sacrae*, operas *The Moon and Sixpence* (1957), *The Visitors* (1972), and *Tobermory* (1977), and *Herrick Cantata* for tenor, mixed chorus, and orchestra (1961).

Concerts at the National Gallery of Art

There will be no Sunday concerts at the National Gallery in July, August, and September. On Friday evenings from Memorial Day through Labor Day, visitors to the Sculpture Garden can enjoy live jazz performed by an eclectic mix of top Washington-area artists. Please check the Gallery's bimonthly Calendar of Events for details.

Sunday concerts will resume on October 2, 2005, at 6:30 pm, with a concert by the National Gallery Orchestra, Christopher Kendall, guest conductor. The program will feature music by Elgar, Wagner, Stravinsky, and Schoenfield, with solo violinist Nicolas Kendall.

For detailed information, please visit the Gallery's website (www.nga.gov) or call (202) 842-6941.

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 after 6:30 pm
is not permitted.

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