



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

National Gallery of Art
2,538th Concert

National Gallery Orchestra
Emil de Cou, *guest conductor*
Sara Nichols and Nancy Stagnitta, *flutists*

June 5, 2005
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Suite bergamasque (1890–1905)

Orchestrated by André Caplet and Gustave Cloez

Prélude: Moderato

Menuet: Andantino

Clair de lune

Passepied: Allegretto ma non troppo

Franz and Karl Doppler (1812–1883; and 1825–1900)

Fantaisie sur des motifs hongrois op. 35 (c. 1860)

Sara Nichols and Nancy Stagnitta, *flutists*

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Symphony no. 4 in B-flat Major, op. 60

Adagio; allegro vivace

Adagio

Allegro vivace

Allegro ma non troppo

The Musicians

NATIONAL GALLERY ORCHESTRA

The National Gallery Orchestra was founded in 1943 and initially consisted of approximately twenty-five players who were also members of the National Symphony. Gradually growing in numbers, it eventually reached the size and status of a symphony orchestra. The ensemble undertakes the full range of chamber and symphonic repertoire and has frequently presented first performances of works by American composers, most notably the 1953 premiere of Charles Ives's *First Symphony* under the direction of Richard Bales.

EMIL DE COU

The National Gallery Orchestra welcomes as guest conductor Emil de Cou, who is the associate conductor and Wolf Trap Festival conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra. In the latter capacity, he conducts all of the National Symphony's performances at Wolf Trap and serves as the media spokesperson for the entire Wolf Trap program. Washington audiences have enjoyed de Cou's dynamic conducting in the traditional Labor Day concerts on the West Lawn of the Capitol and the National Symphony's performances of Handel's *Messiah*. De Cou has also been guest conductor for the symphony orchestras of Houston, Detroit, Montreal, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Milwaukee as well as many of the nation's regional orchestras. He has appeared on the podium at Lincoln Center, Boston's Symphony Hall, and the Chicago Lyric Opera, and he was principal conductor for the San Francisco Symphony Pops Orchestra from 1994 to 1996. De Cou conducted the world premiere recording of the original version of Debussy's *Printemps*—*Suite symphonique*. His other recordings with orchestras reflect his interest in American music and include works by Elliot Goldenthal and Charles T. Griffes.

Born in Los Angeles, Emil de Cou studied the French horn and the piano. After piano studies with Herbert Blomstedt, he was admitted to the Music Academy of Vienna. While in Vienna, he complemented his studies in conducting and composition by playing first horn in the Baden State Theater Orchestra and the Mozart Opera of Salzburg. De Cou also studied conducting under Daniel Lewis at the University of Southern California.

SARA NICHOLS

Sara Nichols is the principal flutist of the Baltimore Opera Orchestra. An active performer in the Baltimore and Washington areas, she has played with the National Gallery Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony, the Opera Theater of St. Louis, the St. Louis Symphony, and at Wolf Trap. A member of the National Gallery Chamber Players Wind Quintet, Nichols also performs on the *flauto traverso* as a member of Pro Musica Rara. A faculty member of Towson University and the Baltimore School for the Arts, she is on the advisory board of the Flute Society of Washington.

NANCY STAGNITTA

A member of the faculty of the Interlochen Arts Academy in Interlochen, Michigan, flutist Nancy Stagnitta performs in Washington with the National Gallery Orchestra and the National Philharmonic and is the principal flutist of the Traverse Symphony Orchestra of Traverse City, Michigan. She is often called upon to perform on the piccolo with the Sarasota and Baltimore Opera Orchestras. She was appointed by the United States Information Agency as artistic ambassador to southern Africa, where she presented recitals and master classes in Angola, Botswana, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, and Namibia. A two-time recipient of the Maryland State Arts Council Individual Artist Award, Stagnitta appeared as both classical soloist and featured jazz artist at the 2002 National Flute Convention and has been invited to perform again at the 2005 Convention in San Diego.

Program Notes

Debussy's *Suite bergamasque* was written at a time when the composer was only beginning to formulate his style. The *Prélude* and the *Menuet* are revivals of the romantic and classical styles, respectively, while the *Passepied* is modeled on the pavane, a dance movement from the baroque period. It is only in *Clair de lune*, which subsequently became immensely popular on its own, that one hears a hint of Debussy's characteristic "impressionism." Originally composed for solo piano, the movements were arranged for orchestra in 1927 (*Clair de lune* by André Caplet, the other movements by Gustave Cloez) on a commission from the ballet company of the marquis de Cuevas. The ballet was presented often in the 1950s under the title *L'Ange gris* (The Gray Angel).

Franz Doppler and his brother Karl were born into a family of composers and instrumentalists. Both chose the flute as their main instrument and had significant careers as performers, conductors, and composers. They often toured as a duo, giving pun-loving journalists and music critics a golden opportunity, as their surname is the masculine form of the German adjective for "double." The Dopplers were founding members of the Hungarian Philharmonic Orchestra in 1853 and provided a number of works for its repertoire, including transcriptions of the *Hungarian Rhapsodies* by Franz Liszt.

Between 1804 and 1806 Beethoven produced some of his most monumental works, including the *Symphony no. 3* ("Eroica"), the *Piano Sonata no. 23* ("Appassionata"), and the *Piano Concerto no. 4*. An inner need for equilibrium may have inspired him to set aside yet another powerful work, a symphony in the key of C minor, in favor of a gentler and more lyrical symphony in the key of B-flat major. Because the latter was finished before the former, it took its place as Beethoven's *Symphony no. 4*. The work in C minor, when finally finished, became Beethoven's *Fifth*.

While he was writing the *Symphony no. 4*, Beethoven was a guest in Silesia at the summer palace of one of his patrons, Prince Lichnowsky. Another guest at the time was Count Franz von Oppersdorf, whose property lay just to the north of the prince's estate. Oppersdorf's love of music was such that he hired as domestic servants only people who could play an orchestral instrument. The count had heard Beethoven's *Symphony no. 2 in D Major* and liked it so much that he commissioned a new symphony from the composer, paying in advance, and invited both Beethoven and Prince Lichnowsky to be his guests for the premiere performance at his estate. Beethoven had not completed the symphony when the date of the performance arrived, but Oppersdorf hosted an event anyway, settling for a presentation by his house orchestra of Beethoven's *Symphony no. 2*. In March 1807, when the *Symphony no. 4* was at last finished, Beethoven dedicated the piece to the count but "sold" it to another of his patrons, Prince Lobkowitz, and premiered it in a private concert on the latter's estate. Oppersdorf understandably took offense, and he never did business with Beethoven again.

The first movement of the *Symphony no. 4* begins with a slow introduction that suggests a work of a mysterious and quiet nature. All at once the mood is broken by eight crashing chords, the tempo changes to *allegro vivace*, and the movement continues with humming activity and buoyancy. After a shorter than usual recapitulation, the movement ends with a florid coda. In the second movement a lyrical melody creates an elegant atmosphere imbued with sublime emotion. The melody appears first in the violin section, and a second theme appears in the clarinet section. The third movement follows the ternary ABA form typical in classical symphonies.

Beethoven calls this energetic movement a *menuetto* (minuet), as his predecessors Haydn and Mozart would have done, but he has definitely composed a scherzo. (In his later symphonies, he abandons the term *menuetto* altogether, as he completes the transition from classicism to romanticism.) The fourth movement, marked by sudden dynamic changes, is cheerful to the point of giddiness. As the end approaches, Beethoven slows the main theme until it is barely recognizable. Then, with a sudden burst of scales in the double bass and cello sections, he rushes the symphony to a boisterous finish.

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.

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

Mailing address
2000B South Club Drive
Landover, MD 20785

www.nga.gov