

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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## NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART 50th ANNIVERSARY CONCERT SEASON

Washington, D.C., August 7, 1990 - In celebration of its 50th anniversary next March, the National Gallery of Art inaugurates a special concert series on October 7 that includes a gala 2000th concert, five world premieres of commissioned scores, an American Music Festival featuring jazz artists Dizzy Gillespie and George Shearing, and solo concerts by musical luminaries who performed at the Gallery early in their careers. The National Gallery Orchestra, conducted by Music Director George Manos, will perform the first two concerts of the thirty-nine free Sunday concert season.

On the occasion of the 2,000th concert of the Gallery's Sunday concert series, which, remarkably, falls on March 17, the exact date of the 50th anniversary of the National Gallery of Art, soprano Arleen Auger will perform as guest artist with the National Gallery Orchestra. The concert will include a new work composed by George Manos, conductor of the orchestra, the Four Last Songs of Richard Strauss, and Beethoven's Symphony No. 7.

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World premieres of works by John LaMontaine, Robert Ward, Daniel Pinkham, Richard Bales and Manos, commissioned in honor of the National Gallery's 50th Anniversary, will be a special feature of the concert season. They will be performed by the Gallery's resident ensembles, the National Gallery Orchestra and the National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble.

Among the prestigious artists returning to the National Gallery during the anniversary season are soprano Martina Arroyo, the Juilliard String Quartet, violinists Daniel Heifetz, Sidney Harth, Oscar Shumsky, Zvi Zeitlin, and pianists Shura Cherkassky, Grant Johannesen, Lilian Kallir, Anton Kuerti, Menahem Pressler, and Gyorgy Sandor. In addition, there will be performances by such internationally renowned guest artists as soprano Alessandra Marc, the Gregg Smith Singers, and pianist James Tocco. Toward the end of the season in April and May, the American Music Festival will include concerts by two of America's greatest jazz artists, Dizzy Gillespie and George Shearing.

National Gallery concerts were inspired by the decision of the great English pianist Myra Hess to remain in London during the Blitz to entertain the troops with recitals at the National Gallery there. Similarly, David E. Finley, the first director, inaugurated the Sunday night concerts in 1942 to accommodate the many servicemen and women in Washington. The first performance, by the U.S. Navy Music School Choir, was held on December 6. Recitals by professional musicians including Claudio Arrau, Earl Wild, Gyorgy Sandor, Emmanuel Vardi, and Oscar Shumsky, were also featured in this first concert season.

In 1943, Richard Bales was invited to conduct the orchestra, which had been named "The National Gallery Sinfonietta." In July of that year he was placed in charge of the Gallery's music program, a position he held until 1985, when George Manos assumed the post. The National Gallery music program is the oldest continuous series of free concerts in Washington and one of the oldest in the world. It is recognized as a standard for a growing number of music programs in museums throughout the United States.

Due to the anticipated popularity of the 50th anniversary concert season, passes will be required. Advance passes will be available free of charge in the main floor information room of the West Building on the Friday and Saturday preceding each concert. Same-day passes will be available throughout the day on Sundays.

The West Garden Court will be open to pass-holders on a first-come, first-served basis at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday. All concerts begin promptly at 7:00 p.m. Access to the West Building of the National Gallery on Sunday evenings will be the entrance located at Constitution Avenue and Sixth Street, N.W.

See the enclosed brochure for the 1990-91 season concert schedule.

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For more information on passes and program details, please call  
(202) 842-6941.