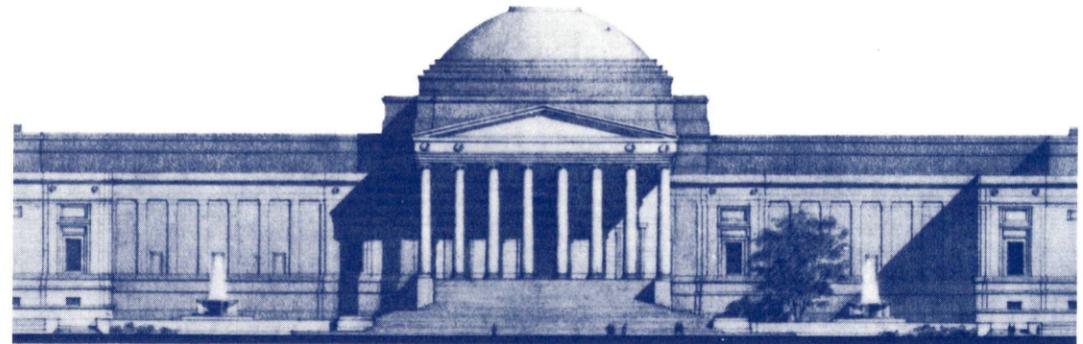


The Fifty-seventh Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2294th Concert

GREGORY SIOLES, *pianist*

Corigliano's *Fantasia on an Ostinato*, written as test piece for the Seventh Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, is a compelling work that appears frequently on recital programs and in an orchestral transcription. The title *Ostinato* comes from the second movement of Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony*. Corigliano says of his work: "Beethoven's near-minimalistic use of his material and my own desire to write a piece in which the performer is responsible for decisions concerning the duration of repeated patterns led me to my first experiment in so-called minimalist techniques." Although having "mixed feelings" about the minimalist style, Corigliano unequivocally states that his aim is to use these techniques with "convincing structure and emotional expression." The overall formal impression is that of a colossal arch.

John Field is universally accepted as the originator of the nocturne, with Chopin undoubtedly being Field's most illustrious and unique successor in this genre. The *Nocturnes, Opus 9, No. 1* and *Opus 55, No. 2* represent the opposite ends of Chopin's creative life. The first nocturne, with its *bel canto* influence, and the second, with its expressive duet over a rolling accompaniment, possess operatic qualities that are unexcelled in Chopin's works.

Liszt's piano transcriptions functioned in his day in much the same way that recorded music functions today, allowing the general public to enjoy music in the home that was otherwise available only in concert halls, or for a select few in the castles of the wealthy. As an example of music "made for home listening," the *Paraphrase from Verdi's Rigoletto* is a perfect example of Liszt's genius at transcribing opera scores for the piano. It offers great tunes, kaleidoscopic colors, and a pianistic virtuosity of inimitable quality, all within a tidy formal package. The coda is especially stirring with a cascade of octaves that brings the work to a brilliant close.

-Program notes by Gregory Sioles,
adapted and edited by Elmer Booze

Sunday Evening, January 17, 1999
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

PROGRAM

Claude Debussy
(1862–1918)

Images, Book II
(1907–1908)

Cloches à travers les feuilles
Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fût
Poissons d'or

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

Partita in B-flat Major
BWV 825 (1735)

Praeludium
Corrente
Sarabande
Menuet I
Menuet II
Giga

INTERMISSION

John Corigliano
(b. 1938)

Fantasia on an Ostinato
(1985)

Frédéric Chopin
(1810–1849)

Nocturne in B-flat Minor
Opus 9, No. 1 (1830–1831)

Nocturne in E-flat Major
Opus 55, No. 2 (1843)

Franz Liszt
(1811–1886)

Concert Paraphrase from
Verdi's "Rigoletto"
(1860)

Pianist **Gregory Sioles** has been the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including an Atwater Kent Grand Prize and a Fulbright scholarship for study in London. Sioles has performed on three continents, in such venues as the Kennedy Center, London's South Bank, and the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in China. Following his London debut in 1983, Sioles made recital appearances in Spain, Germany, Switzerland, and Scotland. He has performed frequently and extensively in the United States and has been featured on National Public Radio. In addition to his activities as a soloist with orchestras and as a recitalist, he has appeared in chamber music concerts with many artists, including Edgar Meyer, Barry Tuckwell, and the Guarneri String Quartet. Sioles holds degrees from the University of California at Los Angeles and from Indiana University, where he was both a fellowship recipient and a guest lecturer in piano. He currently serves on the faculties of the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and the Levine School of Music in Washington, D.C.

Composed in 1907, the three pieces that make up *Images, Book II* present some of Debussy's most evocative, translucent, and poetically sophisticated musical impressions for the piano. *Cloches à travers les feuilles* (*Bells Through the Leaves*) employs a layered texture reminiscent of Javanese gamelan music, similar to that of *Pagodas* from Debussy's suite *Estampes* (1903). *Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fût* (*And the Moon Descends on the Temple Ruins*) is, by turn, austere and harmonically lush, giving the listener a sense of a mysteriously lost world. Recurring throughout the piece is a snatch of plain chant melody that hangs over the ruins like an atmospheric mist. Initially inspired by painted goldfish on a Japanese lacquered box, *Poissons d'or* (*Goldfish*) is as naturalistic a picture as Debussy ever painted, with its lively wit and caprice, as well as the lightning-quick, cinematic changes of direction and flashes of color.

The *Partita in B-flat Major, BWV 825* is the first of six partitas in Bach's *Clavierübung* (*Keyboard Practice*), *Part I*. Made available to the public in 1731, the *Clavierübung* is among the few works of Bach published during his lifetime. The first partita is a work of pristine beauty, combining emotional directness, structural clarity, and elegance in extraordinary balance. The *Praeludium* is a most engaging "invitation to the dance," followed by traditional baroque dances: *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Sarabande*, *Minuet*, and a virtuosic *Gigue* that dares the performer to cross hands repeatedly.