

extraordinary pianists of his time. His compositional efforts were limited to a few chamber music pieces, piano transcriptions of songs by Richard Strauss, and the work on tonight's program. The theme for the variations is Grieg's *Arietta, Op. 12*.

Born in Sydney, Australia, composer Anne Boyd grew up on a remote sheep station in central Queensland. She completed her undergraduate work at the University of Sydney and subsequently went to England to study at the University of York, where she became the first woman to graduate with a doctor of philosophy degree in composition. As a student of East Asian cultures, Boyd responds to Asian influences in her work, and she describes her style as uniquely "Australasian." *Bali Moods No. 1* is based on gamelan music and is written in an equal-tempered version of the *pelog* scale, one of the two predominant scale systems used in Indonesian music. *Bali No. 2* is a meditation on Mt. Agung and its position at the center of Balinese life. It highlights the flute as a melodic instrument of great spiritual purity and power.

Poème was composed by Sotireos Vlahopoulos for Karen Johnson and Brian Ganz. It is a dialogue, at once separated and integrated, for flute and piano. In through-composed form, *Poème* emanates from interrelated thematic and harmonic materials, with the principal theme as the focal point. Although the theme gives way to contrasting sections, its essence is never long absent. Mixing haunting lyricism, sensuous sound, color, and powerful enunciations, *Poème* is at once introspective, sensitive, intense, and intimate.

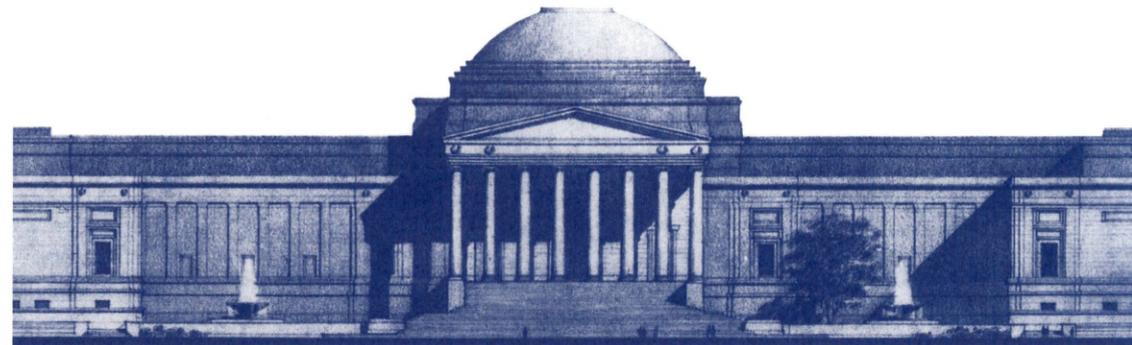
One of the sparkling gems of the flute and piano repertoire is Francis Poulenc's *Sonata*, composed while he was on holiday in Cannes. Dedicated to the American philanthropist and arts patron Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, its Washington premiere performance was given on 14 February 1958 at the Library of Congress by flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal and pianist John Steele Ritter.

Program notes by Karen Johnson,
edited and adapted by Elmer Booze

The Fifty-ninth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2382d Concert

KAREN JOHNSON, *flutist*

BRIAN GANZ, *pianist*

Sunday Evening, 29 April 2001
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

PROGRAM

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)	Suite de ballet (1913)
	Improvisation Humoresque Gavotte Passepied

Walter Giesecking (1895–1956)	Variations on a Theme by Edvard Grieg
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INTERMISSION

Anne Boyd (b. 1946)	Bali Moods Nos. 1 and 2 (1987–1988)
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Sotireos Vlahopoulos (b. 1926)	Poème
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Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)	Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 13 (1875–1876)
	Allegro malinconico Cantilena Presto giocoso

Flutist **Karen Johnson** is known as a colorful stylist of both the solo and the chamber music repertoire for her instrument. Her playing has been described as “exquisite and mesmerizing” by *The Washington Post*. In recent seasons, she has performed with the Takacs String Quartet and the Bach Aria Group at such venues as the Bethlehem Bach Festival and the Glimmerglass Chamber Music Festival. She is active in expanding the flute repertoire and has worked closely with Washington composer Jeffrey Mumford, from whom she recently commissioned a

work for two flutes, entitled *Filaments*. She played the premiere performance of the work, which was featured on Mumford’s CD, *the focus of blue light*. She has also premiered new works by Sotireos Vlahopoulos, William Albright, and Francis McKay. In 1998 she formed a duo, SKYA, with Dutch harpist Astrid Walschot-Stapp, and she is a member of the Washington-based Fessenden Ensemble. The winner of numerous awards and competitions, including a 1998 solo instrumental grant from the Maryland State Arts Council, Karen Johnson is currently on the faculties of the Washington Conservatory of Music and the Levine School of Music.

Pianist **Brian Ganz** is regarded as one of the leading pianists of his generation. After his 1995 performance with the St. Louis Symphony, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* critic wrote: “Note-perfect cascades of rippling arpeggios, melodies soaring into space, and microscopically sculptured phrases only begin to describe Ganz’s breathtaking technique and spectacular musicianship.” Ganz was winner of one of two first grand prizes awarded in the 1989 Marguerite Long/Jacques Thibaud International Piano Competition in Paris. On that occasion, he also received special prizes for the best recital of the competition and best performance of the required work. He has appeared three times at the National Gallery, twice in recital and once as accompanist for violist Nancy Usher. A graduate of the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Ganz was a pupil of Leon Fleisher, Ylva Novik, and Claire Deene. Brian Ganz is musician-in-residence and a member of the piano faculty at St. Mary’s College of Maryland, and has just been appointed to the part-time faculty of The Catholic University of America.

Ralph Vaughan Williams composed only a few chamber works, among them the colorful *Suite de ballet*. He was credited with popularizing English folk music, and the folk element can be heard in these four brief but appealing movements: the hauntingly melodic *Improvisation*, the jaunty, jiglike *Humoresque*, the stately yet simple *Gavotte*, and the delightful *Passepied* in the style of a hornpipe.

The distinguished German pianist, Walter Giesecking, is remembered as a performer rather than a composer. A musician of superb taste and intellect, he was considered one of the most