



# 74TH SEASON OF CONCERTS

OCTOBER 18, 2015 • NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



# PROGRAM

## 3:30 • West Building, West Garden Court

Poulenc Trio

Irina Kaplan, piano

Bryan Young, bassoon

Special guest oboist, Liang Wang,  
principal, New York Philharmonic

Commentary by Stephen Ackert

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka (1804–1857)

*Trio Pathétique in D Minor* (1832)

Allegro Moderato

Scherzo

Largo; Allegro con spirito

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

*Suite No. 1* (1925)

Andante

Napolitana

Española

Balalaika

*Suite No. 2* (1921)

March

Waltz

Polka

Galop

Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)

*Sonata for oboe and piano* (1962)

Elégie

Scherzo

Déploration

*Trio for piano, oboe, and bassoon* (1926)

Presto

Andante

Rondo

## The Musicians

### Poulenc Trio

The Poulenc Trio is the most active touring piano-wind chamber music ensemble in the world. Since its founding in 2003, the trio has performed in forty-five of the fifty United States, and at music festivals around the world, including the White Nights Festival in Russia, where the group premiered two new works with violinist Hilary Hahn.

The Poulenc Trio has a strong commitment to commissioning, performing, and recording new works by living composers. Over the years, the trio has greatly expanded the repertoire available for the oboe, bassoon, and piano, with twenty-two new works written for and premiered by the group, including three triple concertos for the trio and full orchestra.

The ensemble has also made a commitment to explore and promote music that reflects its members' African, Pan-American, Eastern European, and Jewish heritages. Recent concerts have featured works by Afro Cuban jazz great Paquito D'Rivera, Mexican American composer Carlos Medina, and Russian American composer Nataliya Medvedovskaya, as well as composer Jakov Jakoulov's *Yiddish Lexicon*, an exploration of Jewish culture.

The trio launched the pioneering concert series Music at the Museum, in which musical performances are paired with museum exhibitions, with special appearances from guest artists and curators. As part of the series, the trio has collaborated with the National Gallery of Art in Washington, the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, the Baltimore Museum of Art, and the Hermitage State Museum in St. Petersburg. Guest artist collaborators have included violinist Hilary Hahn, the Thibaud Trio of Berlin, soprano Hyunah Yu, and clarinetists Alexander Fiterstein and Anthony McGill.

The Poulenc Trio is deeply engaged in musical and educational outreach programs, including Pizza and Poulenc, an informal performance and residency series for younger audiences around the United States. The trio regularly conducts master classes, with recent engagements at the University of Ohio, San Francisco State University, Florida State University, and the University of Colima in Mexico.

## Liang Wang

Liang Wang joined the New York Philharmonic in September 2006, and occupies the Alice Tully Chair as principal oboist. Previously, he was principal oboe of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Santa Fe Opera, and San Francisco Ballet Orchestra; associate principal oboe of the San Francisco Symphony; and guest principal oboe of the Chicago and San Francisco Symphony Orchestras. He has performed many times as concerto soloist with the New York Philharmonic, including in Hong Kong during the orchestra's 2008 tour of Asia, when he played Richard Strauss's *Oboe Concerto*, led by Xian Zhang.

Recipient of the 2014 Beijing International Music Festival Artist of the Year award, Wang served as artist-in-residence of the Qing Dao Symphony Orchestra, his hometown orchestra, in the 2014–15 season. He was invited by the presidents of China and France to perform Chen Qigang's *Extase* with the Orchestre Colonne de France at the Versailles Royal Opera House in March 2014, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of France-China diplomacy.

Born in Qing Dao, China, in 1980, Liang Wang began oboe studies at the age of seven. In 1993, he enrolled at the Beijing Central Conservatory, and in 2003, he completed his bachelor's degree at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he studied with the principal oboist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Richard Woodhams. Wang is an alumnus of the Music Academy of the West, now a partner in the New York Philharmonic Global Academy. He currently serves on the faculties of the Manhattan School of Music and New York University and is an honorary professor at Beijing's Central Conservatory of Music and the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

## Program Notes

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka is often referred to as the “Father of Russian Music” because of his pioneering incorporation of traditional Russian folk melody, history, and culture into his operas *Ivan Susanin (A Life for the Tsar)* and *Ruslan and Lyudmila*. Glinka's use of Russian themes in opera and other Western-style concert music had a broad influence on the Russian composers that followed him, including those known as The New Russian School, or The Five. Sergei Diaghilev, the Ballets Russes founder who worked closely with artist Marc Chagall's teacher Léon Bakst, adored Glinka and was said by friends to “know *Ruslan and Lyudmila* by heart.”

In 1830, after formal studies and an early career in St. Petersburg, Glinka traveled to Italy. During his three years abroad, the composer formed his mature style, writing several works for instrumental ensemble, including the *Trio Pathétique*. Glinka's compositions of this period, including the *Trio*, illustrate his unique ability to blend traditional source materials (in this case, the Italian bel canto singing style) with contemporary, international composition techniques. Part of Glinka's influence on Russian national musical identity was his use of ethnic song texts, titles, and aesthetic devices designed to evoke the sounds of the East. In Glinka's time, many Russians would have considered melodies from Jewish tradition to be part of an exotic “Orientalism” that included music from the Tatars, Georgians, Armenians, and other nationalities from the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Middle East.

Flush with the success of *Firebird* (1911) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913), Stravinsky's fortunes fell precipitously after the outbreak of World War I, forcing him and his family into exile in Switzerland from 1914 to 1920. Operations at the Ballets Russes temporarily ceased because of the war, thus suspending the composer's main source of income. During the first years of exile, he focused on compositions for smaller ensembles, and worked to further incorporate Russian language and folk idioms into his work.

Stravinsky's two *Suites for Small Orchestra* were originally sketched during this Swiss period and were orchestrated in 1921 and 1925. The original material for the suites came from a set of piano duets, *Three Easy Pieces* (1915) and *Five Easy Pieces* (1917), which Stravinsky wrote as études for his children. Each movement of *Three Easy Pieces* is dedicated to a colleague — composers Alfredo Casella and Erik Satie, and Ballet Russes' leader, Diaghilev.

The music historian Anetta Floirat suggests that both Stravinsky and Chagall's work are linked by their strong rooting in tradition. Although both had a common Russian background, their early exposure to religion and art were very different, with Chagall exposed to the Jewish life of Vitebsk and Stravinsky steeped in Christian orthodoxy and later Catholicism. However, Stravinsky did have early exposure to Jewish music, describing his family's country home in the mostly Jewish Ukrainian village of Ustilug as “something out of Chagall.”

Both Stravinsky and Chagall developed their art in St. Petersburg in the orbit of the World of Art movement, whose luminaries included Bakst, Roerich, and Diaghilev. A main tenet of the World of Art's manifesto promoted the preservation of disappearing traditions and the creation of new, folklore-inspired art, a goal that both Chagall and Stravinsky achieved in many of their works. Perhaps as interesting as the intersection of their artistic impulses, is Chagall and Stravinsky's ability to turn their early emigration and exile from

Russia into spectacular and successful careers in Europe and America. Chagall would later work with Stravinsky indirectly, designing Alicia Markova's costume for American Ballet Theater's 1945 production of *Firebird*, as well as scenery for George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins' staging of that work with the New York City Ballet in 1970.

Francis Poulenc was born in Paris to a wealthy family of pharmaceutical manufacturers (the firm Roche-Poulenc existed until 1999, when it became part of what is today known as Sanofi-Aventis). Poulenc was introduced to music by his mother, who taught him piano, and by his uncle Papoum, her brother, who influenced Poulenc's lifelong love of Parisian theater, cafés, and nightlife. At sixteen, Poulenc began studying with Ricardo Viñes, an avid avant-garde pianist and friend of Ravel, Debussy, and Satie. Around the same time, Poulenc met Auric, Honegger, and Milhaud, and dedicated his first published composition, *Rapsodie nègre*, to them.

As a member of the group of French composers known as Les Six, Poulenc contributed two pieces to the group's highly regarded collective works, the *Album des Six*, and a ballet, *Les Mariés de La Tour Eiffel*, based on a text by Jean Cocteau, which Chagall chose as the subject of a surrealist painting of the same title, completed in 1939. Poulenc also celebrated Chagall in his 1956 song cycle *Le Travail du Peintre* (The Work of the Painter), based on poetry by Paul Éluard. Each song in the cycle is dedicated to a painter, including Picasso, Chagall, Braque, and others. One of Éluard's verses on Chagall reads:

Ane ou vache coq ou cheval	Donkey or cow rooster or horse
Jusqu'à la peau d'un violon	Even the skin of a violin
Homme chanteur un seul oiseau	A singing man a single bird
Danseur agile avec sa femme...	An agile dancer with his wife

In a letter dated October 1957, Chagall thanked Poulenc for his tribute in *Le Travail*, and for his signed copy of the score.

Poulenc wrote his oboe sonata in 1962. The piece is dedicated to the memory of Sergei Prokofiev, the Russian composer who had died a decade before. Along with his clarinet sonata, it is among the composer's final works. Written in Cannes in 1926 and dedicated to Manuel de Falla, Poulenc's *Trio for piano, oboe, and bassoon* reflects his own virtuosic skill as a pianist and his great admiration for wind instruments.

*Program notes by Bryan Young*

*Special thanks to Valeska Wittig, graduate intern, Department of Academic Programs, for her research on Chagall and music.*

## The Seventy-Fourth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin Upcoming Concerts

Nordic Weekend Celebrating  
150th Birthdays of Jean Sibelius  
and Carl Nielsen

National Gallery of Art String Quartet  
October 23, Friday, 12:00  
West Building, West Garden Court

National Gallery of Art Piano Trio  
October 24, Saturday, 12:00  
West Building, West Garden Court

National Gallery of Art Orchestra  
Peter Wilson, guest conductor  
October 25, Sunday, 3:30  
West Building, West Garden Court

Music by Sibelius and Nielson

Inscape Chamber Orchestra  
Music by Dallapiccola, Górecki,  
Hallman, Scriabin, and Young  
November 1, Sunday, 3:30  
West Building, West Garden Court

## General Information

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The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that all portable electronic devices are turned off.

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**Cover** Jacques Villon, *Spanish Dancer (Danseuse Espagnole)* (detail), 1899, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

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