

ACF Pays Tribute to Composer Diane Goolkasian Rahbee

ARLINGTON, Mass.— The second annual Mirak Chamber Music Series will present a pianist Alessandra Pompili, from the United Kingdom, and Christina Gullans on cello from Washington D.C., on Sunday, October 20 at 4 p.m., at the Armenian Cultural Foundation's (ACF) John Mirak Hall. The concert is in tribute to composer, educator and pianist Dianne Goolkasian Rahbee. The program, titled *Armenian Vistas: Diasporic Perspectives and Legacies*, co-sponsored by Amaras Art Alliance, Armenian International Women's Association, and Hamazkaine Educational and Cultural Association, will include works by Armenian composers: Stéphan Elmas, Arno Babajanyan, Emanuel Melik-Aslanian, Komitas, Koharik Ghazarossian, Alan Hovhaness and Dianne Goolkasian Rahbee.

A first-generation Armenian-American, daughter of Armenian Genocide survivor Peter Aharon Goolkasian and talented violist Zabelle Yeshilian, Dianne Goolkasian was born in Somerville. She had an early love of music and began her piano studies in Boston with Antoine Louis Moeldner. She continued her studies at the Juilliard School in New York as a piano major, and upon completion she went on to the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria to study chamber music.

Returning to Boston, Goolkasian Rahbee engaged for several years in teaching piano privately. In addition, she conducted workshops, gave lectures and master classes internationally before deciding to concentrate more seriously on composing. Over the years Goolkasian Rahbee created an impressive and diverse body of over 300 works. Her repertoire consisted of different forms of music for piano solo, orchestra, instrumental ensembles, percussion, voice, concertos (for violin and orchestra, piano and orchestra, flute and orchestra), tone poems, bagatelles (for flute, mandolin, wind instruments), fanfares, toccatas, trios of various combinations, and even a wedding march.

"Hers is a compositional style in which neo-classicism and neo-romanticism meet, along with an ethnic flavor—the influence of Armenian, her first spoken language," said one critic about the music of Goolkasian Rahbee. Goolkasian Rahbee explained in a recent interview, "My musical language is indicative of everything I've experienced—it's a mixture." Performing in tribute to Goolkasian Rahbee, are two musicians who are themselves highly accomplished.

Alessandra Pompili has performed for years as a soloist to critical and public acclaim in Europe, the United Kingdom, and the US. She is the artistic director and co-founder of the concert series "Ashle Notes" (UK), and the pianist-in residence of the Società Dante Alighieri (Manchester). Beside the traditional repertoire, Alessandra is especially known as a champion of the music of Alan Hovhaness - often performing and/or recording it as premières.

She is a graduate with high honors of L'Aquila "Alfredo Casella" Conservatoire and the École Normale de Musique de Paris A. Cortot" where she was awarded the first prize with special mention.

Christina Gullans is praised for her "incredible depth" [*Broadway World Review*], "haunting sound" [*Boston Arts Review*], "exemplary musicianship" [Guy Rickards, *Musical Opinion*]. A Washington, D.C. based chamber musician with an interest in music semiology, her playing has been heard in top concert halls around the world. In 2020, Christina released *Across the Ages*, an album of works written by the prolific American composer Alan Hovhaness, with Albany Records. The CD has been praised as a much-needed and overdue addition to the American cello discography, and as an important act of rehabilitation for music that is almost unknown.

Christina holds an M.M. from Indiana University where she was awarded a Music Merit Award and E. Heinz Scholarship. Her past teachers include; Janos Starker, Helga Winold, Csaba Onczay, and John Sant'Ambrogio.

The concert is free and open to the public. It will be held on Sunday, October 20, at 4 p.m. at the Cultural Foundation (441 Mystic Street, Arlington, MA) For questions and other details, you may contact the ACF during office hours at (781) 646-3090 or by email (armeniancultural.fdn@gmail.com) to reserve seats.