

MUSICAL PRAYER

WALTER GRAY

violoncello

JOSEPH ADAM

piano

Suite No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1008

Prélude

Sarabande

Johann Sebastian Bach

(1685–1750)

Bach's six Suites for unaccompanied violoncello date from between 1717–1723, his years of service as Kapellmeister at Cöthen, and are the earliest important works for an instrument that had barely emerged into its present-day form from its origins as a member of the Renaissance family of viols. These Suites remain to this day both a technical and musical challenge, and are a cornerstone of repertoire. Perhaps most remarkable is Bach's skill in implying full, complete harmony in an instrument that plays primarily single-note lines, while still writing music of the most expressive emotion.

Five Pieces in Folk Style, op. 102

Mit Humor

Langsam

Robert Schumann

(1810–1856)

Unlike much of Schumann's later chamber pieces, written for piano and a range of possible solo instruments, the Five Pieces in Folk Style were composed in 1850 specifically for violoncello and piano. Using irregular accents and phrase lengths, offbeat accents, and singing melodies within an uncomplicated, familiar tonal world, Schumann sought to capture the essence of the passion and vitality of rustic folk music.

Sonata in F Major, op. 99

Adagio affettuoso

Johannes Brahms

(1844–1897)

Once Brahms achieved lasting success as one of Europe's most acclaimed and successful living composers, much of his compositional work was achieved during his annual summer holidays, usually several months in duration, and often spent in the countryside in Switzerland. The summer of 1886 was particularly fruitful, and resulted in two sonatas for violin and piano, a piano trio, and this sonata for piano and violoncello (Brahms was specific in naming the piano first in the title page). This second movement is essentially reflective, and makes extensive use of pizzicato in the extremes of the cello register.

Though known principally for his piano and orchestral compositions, Sergei Rachmaninoff was also one of the supreme composers of Russian song, and composed some seventy-one settings between 1890 and 1916. All were settings of Russian poetry or sacred text save one – the wordless “Vocalise,” composed in 1912, and without exception the most popular of all Rachmaninoff’s songs. This haunting melody is a particularly fine example of Rachmaninoff’s skill in constructing highly expressive melodies within a tightly constrained range of notes and motion, restricted with few exceptions to step-wise motion throughout the entire song.

WALTER GRAY has performed as soloist and chamber musician throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the Far East. He was a founding member of the Kronos Quartet and for over five years presented hundreds of concerts including numerous world premieres. Mr. Gray’s expanded contemporary music adventures have included working with Pearl Jam, Dave Mathews Band, Queensrÿche, Heart, and David Lanz. He has recorded works of John Cage, Paul Schoenfield, Jake Heggie, and Chinariy Ung and produced recordings for the London Symphony, Seattle Symphony, New Hampshire Music Festival and numerous solo and chamber musicians.

A member of the Seattle Symphony since 1979, Mr. Gray has performed as soloist with the orchestra several times. “Gray played with his usual intensity and flair...the cello’s lyrical possibilities are realized.” (The Seattle Times) He has taught at SUNY Geneseo, Mills College, Western Washington University, and the University of North Texas. In the summer he makes regular appearances at the Olympic, Marrowstone, New Hampshire, and Grand Teton Music Festivals. He has performed occasionally with the Cathedral Chamber Orchestra in performances of Mozart’s Requiem and Pergolesi’s Stabat Mater.

JOSEPH ADAM was first appointed Cathedral Organist at St. James Cathedral in 1993, and was named Director of Music in 2018. There he leads a program that includes three adult choirs and three youth choirs that provides music for nearly 600 services annually, as well as an extensive concert series that presents a wide range of choral and organ programs.

A dedicated educator, for twenty years he taught organ and harpsichord as a faculty member at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma. He continues this work at the University of Washington as Artist in Residence in Organ at the University of Washington for the 2019-2020 academic year. Resident Organist of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra since 2003, he performs regularly with the orchestra.

His playing received international attention when he was awarded the First Prize in the St. Albans International Organ Competition in 1991, one of the most prestigious organ competitions in the world. During the coming year, he will be a part of a series of recitals at St. James Cathedral that will present performances of the complete organ works of Louis Vierne in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the composer’s birth. His performances this season include recitals at St. Mark’s Cathedral in Seattle, St. Cecilia Cathedral in Omaha, and Stanford University. He recently gave performances of the Poulenc *Concerto* and Respighi *Suite for Organ and Strings* with the North Carolina Symphony at the new Cathedral of the Holy Name of Jesus in Raleigh.

Joseph Adam was educated at The University of Iowa, the Eastman School of Music, and the University of Washington, and concertizes as a member of the Windwerk Artists cooperative.