

WALTER GRAY

violoncello

JOSEPH ADAM

piano

Five Elegies for solo violoncello (1985)

Lento, un poco rubato; semplice
Lento, un poco rubato; appassionato
Allegro; ostinato
Mesto; cantabile
Andante; tranquillo

Bern H. Herbolsheimer
1948–2016

Sonata in F Major, op. 99

Allegro vivace
Adagio affettuoso
Allegro passionato
Allegro molto

Johannes Brahms
1833–1897

BERN HERBOLSHEIMER received recognition throughout the United States and Europe for over 500 works ranging from ballet to symphonic, operatic, chamber and choral works. His numerous major commissions and premieres included ballets for the Frankfurt Ballet, the Atlanta Ballet, the Pacific Northwest Ballet, and the Eugene Ballet. His first opera, *Aria da Capo*, won first prize in the National Opera Association's New Opera Competition. *Mark Me Twain*, his second opera, was commissioned and premiered in 1993 by the Nevada Opera for its Silver Anniversary season. "The opera is filled with attractive, dramatic, often eloquent music... it could become an American work of genuine significance."

His *Symphony No. 1* was premiered by the Florida Symphony under conductor Kenneth Jean. Other orchestral music was premiered by the Seattle Symphony, Northwest Symphony Orchestra, and Music Today in New York under the direction of Gerard Schwarz. His vocal and choral works have been performed in Portugal, Spain, Germany, France, Italy, Australia, South America, Canada, Norway, Russia, Hungary, Japan, and throughout the United States. According to the Seattle Weekly, who named him as Best (Classical) Composer in 2005, "no Seattle composer has a more assured and polished craft than Herbolsheimer. His choral writing — and there's a lot of it — is luminous and subtle."

His final premieres were his chamber opera *The Quartet* at Carnegie Hall and *Gold and Silver* in Steven Soderbergh's HBO hit series *The Knick*.

A frequent award winner, Herbolsheimer was Seattle Artist-in-Residence (Seattle Arts Commission), Washington State Composer of the Year (WSMTA), and winner of the Melodious Accord Choral Music Competition

(*Te Deum*), in addition to the National Opera Association's New Opera Competition (*Aria da Capo*). He was also the recipient of composition commissions from the National Endowment for the Arts (*Symphony No. 1*), Chamber Music America (*Tanguy Music*), the Seattle Symphony (*In Mysterium Tremendum*), and from numerous local organizations such as Seattle Men's Chorus, Seattle Choral Company, St. James Cathedral, Opus 7 Vocal Ensemble, Seattle Pro Musica, the Esoterics, and the Cascadian Chorale. His works appear on dozen of CDs.

As pianist, Herbolsheimer accompanied at the Bergen International Music Festival, the Schloss Elmau Festival, and on concert series for Columbia Artists, Saint Martin's Abbey, the Spanish Institute, the Goethe Institute, the American Opera Festival of the Sierra, Estoril/Cascais Concerts in Portugal, the Tatarstan Opera in Kazan, Battelle Institute, the Ojai Music Festival, and regularly in the Western Washington area. He served on the music faculty of Seattle's Cornish College, where he taught composition-related classes and held a private studio, and the University of Washington, where he taught graduate classes in the voice program. At the end of the 2000–2001 school year he was selected as the Outstanding Teacher of Music at Cornish College.

Walter Gray writes: "It is such a great pleasure to revisit Bern's cello pieces after so many years. His writing is full of emotion and his own personal approach to the medium of solo cello that they are unique in the repertoire. During the discussions that we had about style, I brought in the solo cello works of Benjamin Britten, Zoltán Kodály, and Johann Sebastian Bach as examples of successes in the genre. We explored the technical demands that each presents to the performer, as this helps or possibly makes more difficult the performance of these works. Bern succeeds in distilling the drama of performance challenges by keeping the technical moments to a minimum and interspersing them with lyrical material. I hope that you enjoy the Five Elegies as much as I do."

Chamber music played a vital part in the creative work of **JOHANNES BRAHMS**. Throughout his career, he was intensely attracted to this form of composition, and he produced a substantial number of works for various ensembles, most often combinations of two instruments, but also as many as six. He wrote for the usual combinations, such as violin and piano and the string quartet, but he also experimented with unusual ensembles like horn, violin, and piano (*Trio*, op. 40) and sextets of pairs of violins, violas, and violoncellos (*Sextets*, op. 18 and 36). His chamber works rank among the most significant and at the same time the most intimate and personal contributions Brahms bestowed upon the music world.

How irresistible an attraction chamber music was for Brahms is revealed by an episode which occurred in the last years of his life. After he had passed his sixtieth birthday, Brahms, always prone to ruthless self-criticism, insisted that his creative work had come to a stop. He turned to a project that required more technical skill than real inspiration and arranged a number of folk songs for voice and piano. When he delivered the manuscript to his publisher, he ominously remarked that he had thus expressed his "adieu as a composer."

There is no clear dividing line to be drawn in Brahms between the symphonic and chamber music styles. At the outset of his career, Robert Schumann, in the prophetic article "Neue Bahnen" ("New Paths"), described the young Brahms's instrumental compositions as "veiled symphonies," while the 20th century musicologist and philosopher Theodor Adorno wrote of the chamber music character of the four symphonies. Finally Arnold Schönberg, who inaugurated a new era in the understanding of Brahms with his essay "Brahms the Progressive," made an orchestral version of the Piano Quartet in G Minor, op. 25 – yet another testimony to the close relationship between the two genres in Brahms' musical thought.

Brahms composed several early violin sonatas, which he characteristically withheld from later publication and later destroyed, but it seems particularly fitting that his first published duo sonata was for piano and violoncello, both instruments he had played as a child. His piano playing, of course, was that of a master, but he had also reached a significant level of accomplishment on the cello. Brahms returned to the cello during a particularly productive summer holiday spent in Hofstetten near Lake Thun in the Austrian Bernese Oberland during the summer of 1886. In the space of a few months, he completed the F Major Cello Sonata, as well as the Violin Sonatas in A Major and D Minor, the Piano Trio in C Minor, and two sets of songs eventually published as Opus 105 and 106.

The new sonata for cello disturbed many of its early listeners with its unusual tonal scheme: the first subject of the impassioned opening movement is in F Major, whereas the development section begins in the remote key of F-sharp Minor (this F – F-sharp relationship reappears again, as the second movement is in F Major, and the recapitulation of the final movement begins in F-sharp Major rather than the expected F Major tonic). The work opens on an impassioned set of cello gestures, almost like fanfares, that make up the first subject over tremolos on the piano. Characteristically of Brahms, the tremolos prove to be more than mere accompaniment but thematic material in its own right, which the cello can take over. Initially, this comes after a second subject no less bold than the first, but the idea is used most strikingly in the development; here the cello tremolos are set as a background to piano chords that take the main notes of the first subject down across a mysterious chromatic scale.

The calm of the second movement seems deceptive, in spite of the meditative opening – this *Adagio affettuoso* makes unusual use, at least for Brahms, of pizzicato, in the extremes of the cello register. However, it is based essentially on two song-like melodies, the first heard after four preparatory bars, the second following a pause and in a new key, each repeated with a new variety of texture. There is speculation that this movement might have originally been a part of his first sonata for cello in 1862 – the fugal finale of that work dates from 1865 – as the work originally had an *Adagio* second movement, which Brahms withdrew and may have destroyed.

The *Allegro passionato* sounds as if it will be the finale, opening with energetic rhythms and outbursts almost in the manner of a much younger Brahms; but the halting of the music for a trio section, calmer in nature, before the repeat of the *passionato* music, indicates that more is to come. The actual finale is a rondo, with a swiftly running theme whose amiability is interrupted but scarcely disturbed by the contrasting episodes.

This finale may seem at first glance too insubstantial to balance the other three movements; however, Brahms had quite successfully used the same approach a few years earlier in his Second Piano Concerto, with three massive symphonic movements, capped with a lighter, almost frivolous finale. There are many similarities between the two compositions: the prominent extended solo cello opening of the luminous third movement of the concerto; the overall character of the piano writing, full-bodied yet not violent; and the final movements of both works, lighter in character, more playful, yet fully satisfying after three movements of serious fare.

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 Chinary 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, 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. Continuing this work, he was named Artist-in-Residence in Organ at the University of Washington in 2019. As Resident Organist of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra since 2003, he has performed regularly with the SSO, as well as numerous solo recitals. 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. His subsequent performances have included

recitals in notable venues throughout Europe and America. During the present season, 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 last season included recitals at St. Mark's Cathedral in Seattle, St. Cecilia Cathedral in Omaha, and Stanford University. He also 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 holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in piano performance from The University of Iowa, and the Performer's Certificate in Organ from the Eastman School of Music; he is a Candidate for the DMA at the University of Washington, and concertizes as a member of the Windwerk Artists cooperative.

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St. James Cathedral ❖ Seattle

Friday Musical Prayer in the Cathedral

Join us each Friday evening at 6:30pm as our Cathedral Musicians and friends present meditative music to soothe the soul and bring a quiet end to a busy week.

October 30 ♦ Eliza Woodyard, *soprano*, with Samuel Libra, *organ*

November 6 ♦ Mark Hilliard Wilson, *guitar*

November 13 ♦ John Carrington, *harp*

November 20 ♦ Alexander White, *trumpet*, with Joseph Adam, *organ*

The complete organ works of Louis Vierne

The French composer Louis Vierne, organist of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris from 1900 until his death in 1937, left us an invaluable legacy in his compositions for the organ. We continue our observance of the 150th anniversary of Vierne's birth with a survey of his music written for the King of Instruments. Each program is livestreamed at 7:00pm and is approximately forty minutes in length.

Thursday, November 19 ♦ Samuel Libra, Cathedral Associate Organist ♦ *Symphony No. 4 in G Minor*

Tuesday, December 1 ♦ Joseph Adam, Cathedral Organist ♦ *Symphony No. 6 in B Minor*

Date TBA ♦ Joseph Adam, Cathedral Organist ♦ *Symphony No. 5 in A Minor*

Chamber Music for strings and piano by Johannes Brahms

The chamber music of Johannes Brahms is among the most treasured and beloved music composed in the late 19th century. Join us in these programs, each featuring one of the sonatas written for strings and piano, with musicians from the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. Each program is livestreamed at 7:00pm, and is approximately forty-five minutes in length.

Tuesday, November 10 ♦ Roberta Hansen Downey, *violoncello*, with Joseph Adam, *piano* ♦ Clarke: Sonata ♦ Brahms: *Sonata in E Minor*, op. 38

The Cathedral Music website will have updates and additions to this schedule as it develops. For the most up-to-date schedule, please visit www.stjames-cathedral.org/music/concerts.

