

WELCOME to our Chamber and Organ music concert. It was going to be a Chamber music concert, but since we have at Mary Star a magnificent pipe organ and the organist to play it, we would have missed an opportunity!

You just heard a prelude to Solo Suite #3 by Johann Sebastian Bach, and it is also the prelude to the journey through harmonies that we propose this afternoon.

String instruments like the Violin or Cello were not designed for the orchestra. Grouping them in sections of 12 violins or cellos came in the late 17th century. They are individual voices. But as you heard already, the individual voice of a cello can sound like “polyphony”, when several voices join together. Johann Sebastian Bach was a composer during what is called the “Baroque” period, at the beginning of the 18th century, and the Cello solo suite of which you heard an excerpt are still considered a reference for such “melodic polyphony” when the single “voice” of the cello create harmonies that we typically associate to several voices.

Our next piece is by Joseph Haydn. He was influenced by Johannes Sebastian Bach’s son Carl Philip Emmanuel, who was also a composer. Haydn was also a mentor of Mozart, a tutor of Beethoven. He was employed for 30 years as a court composer for the Esterazy family and was able to develop is considered new forms of music. He is considered the father of the Symphony and the father of the String Quartet . The duet we will hear was written for an instrument called the Baryton viola, which both Prince Esterazy and Haydn could play. Haydn wrote 175 pieces for this baryton viola many of which were later transcribed for opera when Prince Esterazy developed a passion for opera.

In our travel through harmonies we are now inviting the king of instruments, the organ. The piece is called Kol Nidrei, which means “All Vows”. The Kol Nidrei is a prayer sung on the eve of Yom Kippur, the day of atonement. This prayer lists all the kinds of Vows made to God and declare them null and void as a prelude to receive God’s forgiveness. Text of the “Kol Nidrei” prayer:

(All vows, and things we have made forbidden on ourselves, and oaths, and items we have consecrated to the Temple, and vows issued with the expression “konum,” and vows which are abbreviated, and vows issued with the expression “kanos,” that we have vowed, and sworn, and dedicated, and made forbidden upon ourselves; from this Yom Kippur until next Yom Kippur— may it come to us at a good time—We regret having made them may they all be permitted forgiven, eradicated and nullified, and may they not be valid or exist any longer. Our vows shall no longer be vows, and our prohibitions shall no longer be prohibited, and our oaths are no longer oaths.)

But the prayer became misunderstood as an authorization to lie through one’s teeth... and was used when Jews were subject to forced conversions! To lift the confusion, it was removed from the Reform Jewish Liturgy in the 19th Century, before Bruch who

was a protestant conductor, composed the piece in 1880 as a gift to the Jewish community of Liverpool where he was head of the symphony.

When the Kol Nidrei was reinstated for the Yom Kippur ceremonies in 1945, the debate of whether to use the words or not continued... So this cello version became a compromise allowing the spirit of the prayer without the ambiguity of the words, and is used for the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement.

This piece has thus become a symbol of repentance in preparation to receiving God's forgiveness. Christians, Jews and many more can agree to that.

Rheinhold Glière was an Ukrainian Composer active at the beginning of the 20th century and the eight miniature pieces he wrote for Cello and Violin in 1909 that we will hear are considered a masterpiece in this very unusual genre of chamber music . Each piece has a very strong character and very expressive in very little time, with only two instruments.

Dimitri Shostakovich was Russian, born in 1906, so we are now solidly in the 20th century, he composed the music for a movie called the Gadfly in 1955, and the music was rearranged in three duets for violins with piano. We'll hear the first of these duets, here rearranged for Violin, Cello and Piano.

Cesar Franck was Belgian but he was a master of Organ in Paris and an innovator. He was also the teacher of for great generation of organists. The Franck Chorale was from his last set of three pieces, completed on his deathbed. In 1890 he was in a cab which collided with a horse-drawn trolley, and although it looked at first like he recovered, and started work on the chorale, health complications ensued. A biographer has written: "The sense of Franck bidding a protracted good-bye is evident throughout. ... It is hard, it is well-nigh impossible, to believe that the *Chorals'* composer retained any illusions about his chances of full physical mending."[\[56\]](#)

We started our journey with a single voice creating harmonies, we are now concluding it with the full choir of the organ, almost 200 years later, with much fuller harmonies, with a more modern sound that we will call “chromatic” . Thank you all for coming!