

# Prayer and Redemption

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Saturday, May 4, 2013 - 8:00 pm

Sunday, May 5, 2013 - 2:00 pm

## **Turina - La Oración del Torero Joaquin Turina (1882-1949)**



Although he started schooling in medicine to please his family, Turina soon abandoned all study except music. He became known in Seville as a pianist and composer while still in his early teens. His early compositions met with only moderate success. The Spanish public received his works better when he began following the advice of his friends, the composers Albeniz and Falla, to use material from Spanish popular music in his compositions.

La Oración del Torero was originally written for a lute quartet, then arranged for string quartet, then for string orchestra. The title means The Bullfighter's Prayer. Written well after Turina's decision to "fight bravely for the national music of our country," the spirit of the music is very Spanish, although it also reflects his musical education in France. The overall peaceful, stoic mood of the piece reflects the bullfighter's quiet courage.

## **Prayer of St. Gregory**

## **Alan Hovhaness (1911-2000)**

Hovhaness is one of those composers who defies classification. He followed his own direction regardless of what other composers of his time did. After Hovhaness worked with such luminaries as Copland and Bernstein, another teacher introduced him to the music of the Far East, including Armenia, the homeland of Hovhaness' father. So, at the age of 36, he destroyed almost all of his early compositions and began anew, writing highly individualistic music with a marked Eastern influence that shows his interest in spirituality and mysticism.



The Prayer of St. Gregory is an intermezzo from the opera Etchmiadzin. Its meditative pace commemorates St. Gregory, who brought Christianity to Armenia in the fourth century. It was described by Hovhaness as "a prayer in darkness." The trumpet solo calls forth in spiritual declamation with a background of a choir of strings.

## Symphony No. 2

## Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)



Rachmaninoff was born into wealth, but his father gambled away most of the estate. Rachmaninoff entered the Moscow Conservatory at the age of 12. In the beginning, he depended on his superior innate talent rather than hard work and scholarship to stay ahead. But in 1885 he began working with the piano teacher Zvereff, who helped him gain discipline and focus. During the next four years, living and studying with the professor, he met Tchaikovsky and other great Russian musicians. Rachmaninoff was an extraordinarily gifted pianist, tall and thin with very large hands.

The first movement of the symphony begins by setting out the basic idea for the work with a theme played by the cellos and basses in the first few bars. A slow introduction works into a sweeping main section with enough development to give the impression of taking a long train voyage through the Russian countryside. The second movement begins with a quick and dancelike theme that alternates with secondary themes. The third movement is lush and spacious like a love ballad. The fourth movement raises the tempo and lets the sunshine in, as happy and optimistic a movement as Rachmaninoff ever wrote.

*Notes by R. M. Teplitz*

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