



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

School of Music

College of Visual and Performing Arts

2020-2021 Season Presented by
SHAW MEDIA
est. 1851

Student Recital Series

ELLA CASWELL

Viola

Assisted by:
Heewon Cha, piano

Friday, April 23, 2021
6:30 p.m.
Boutell Memorial Concert Hall

PROGRAM

Cello Suite No. 5 in C minor, BWV 1011

Prelude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Gavotte
Gigue

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Morpheus for viola and piano

Rebecca Clarke
(1886-1979)

Sonata in Eb Major, Op. 120, No. 2

Allegro amabile
Allegro appassionato
Andante con moto – Allegro

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

This performance is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music degree.



Program Notes:

Bach: Cello Suite No. 5 in C minor

Johann Sebastian Bach's (1685-1750) Six Solo Cello Suites are perfectly adaptable to viola and are staples in our literature. Bach's compositions for solo instruments were revolutionary in the virtuosity of the writing. String instruments were considered "single-note" instruments at the time, but Bach opened new horizons with the literal (or implied) harmonies accompanying the melody. One of the unique challenges in the fifth suite is the unusual tuning (called *scordatura*), in which the violas or cellos top string is tuned down one whole step. This tuning creates a darker sound with the instrument resonating in different ways than it would with the traditional tuning.

The Prelude consists of two parts: a slow introduction and a fugue. This harmonically rich prelude opens with a dramatic C octave and progresses in a French overture style, with frequent use of dotted eighth-sixteenth note rhythms. The fugue is expansive in the context of the suite form. The Allemande is a stately, elegant dance and is reminiscent of the prelude in this suite. The Courante is a lively, vigorous dance that has a rugged character. The Sarabande in this suite is cold and other worldly; this sublime work of art provides an ethereal moment of contemplation amongst the livelier movements surrounding it. The two rustic Gavottes provide a slightly lighter feel to the otherwise darker suite. The compact Gigue brings the suite to an understated close.

Clarke: *Morpheus* for viola and piano

Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979) was an accomplished violist and composer who performed and wrote music during a time when woman were largely shut out of the field. *Morpheus*, written in 1917, is an example of Clarke's impressionistic musical language. The harmonies and special techniques (such as the use of a mute and harmonics) create uniquely colorful and sensual sounds. *Morpheus* is the name of a Greek god who is associated with sleep; the musical character of this piece portrays the dreamy nature implied by the title.

Brahms: Sonata in Eb Major, Op. 120, No. 2

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) originally wrote this sonata for clarinet and piano and later, at the request of the publisher, prepared a version for viola and piano. This sonata, one of Brahms' final works, exemplifies a contented, satisfied maturity developed through the joys and sorrows of a well-lived life. The moderation in both the mood and tempos of this sonata creates a relaxed ease of expression. The rich but carefree melody in the first movement, *Allegro amabile*, sets the stage for the piece. The second movement, *Allegro appassionato*, is where one would expect passionate outbreaks, but this movement still has an element of reserve. It is not a "whip-cracking" scherzo like other pieces Brahms wrote. The final movement, *Andante con moto*, is a gracious theme with variations building to a vigorous celebration at the work's end.



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Sources:

[Suite No. 5 in C minor | The Cello Suites of J.S. Bach \(stanford.edu\)](#)

[EXTENDED PROGRAM NOTES FOR: BACH'S FIFTH SUITE FOR SOLO CELLO, BWV1011;](#)

[BEETHOVEN'S SONATA FOR PIANO AND VIOLONCELLO, OP.69; MARTINU'S VARIATIONS ON A](#)

[SLOVAKIAN THEME, H.378 \(siu.edu\)](#)

[Rebecca Clarke, Piano Trio \(sllmf.org\)](#)

[ColettiRecitalProgramNotes-1 \(instantencore.com\)](#)

[Morpheus \(Rebecca Clarke\) - Wikipedia](#)

[PROGRAM NOTES: BRAHMS FESTIVAL - Vancouver Recital Society \(vanrecital.com\)](#)