



40 YEARS



LC04487

OUR AMERICAN ROOTS

EMMANUEL FELDMAN, cello • JOY CLINE PHINNEY, piano

GERSHWIN • BARBER • WALKER • COPLAND

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George Gershwin

*Two Pieces from Porgy and Bess arranged by Jascha Heifetz,
adapted for cello by Emmanuel Feldman*

1. It Ain't Necessarily So [2:42]
2. My Man's Gone Now [3:56]

*Three Preludes arranged for cello and piano
by Emmanuel Feldman*

3. Prelude I, Allegro ben ritmato e deciso [1:40]
4. Prelude II, Andante con moto e poco rubato [3:50]
5. Prelude III, Allegro ben ritmato e deciso [1:19]

Samuel Barber

Sonata for Violoncello and Piano, opus 6

6. Allegro ma non troppo [7:58]
7. Adagio [4:18]
8. Allegro appassionato [5:57]

George Walker

Sonata for Cello and Piano (1957)

9. Allegro passionato [7:14]
10. Sostenuto [5:34]
11. Allegro [3:15]

Aaron Copland

*Waltz and Celebration from "Billy the Kid" arranged for
cello and piano by the composer*

12. Waltz, molto moderato [3:59]
13. Celebration, Allegro [2:33]

Total Time: 54:18

Notes on the Program

For generations of composers, the cello has been a gift that keeps on giving. Its range, the widest of any instrument outside keyboards, starts nearly as low as a double bass and ends, some four and a half octaves later, nearly as high as a violin. It is unsurpassed as a singing instrument, the first choice for elegiac pieces, and its moods stretch from the most tender to the most ferocious. Bach and Beethoven first explored the depths and heights of what the cello can do. Beethoven wrote essentially the first sonatas for cello and piano, and he emancipated the instrument from the bass line in chamber and orchestral music. Since then nearly every composer has taken up the cello in some of their most beloved and far-reaching chamber music.

The works on this recording are all American and all essentially songful. They explore not only the expressive and technical range of the cello, but the range of what it can mean to be an “American” composer. George Gershwin was a musician of Russian-Jewish background whose most significant work, above all his opera *Porgy and Bess*, was grounded in African-American music in general and the blues in particular. Aaron Copland, also from a Russian-Jewish background, created a distinctive “Americana” style made from elements of folk music and jazz and, as in the pieces on this recording, cowboy music. George Walker is a composer of African American/West Indian background whose highly personal Cello Sonata defies categories, but who

retains a subtle undercurrent of black American tradition. The Cello Sonata of the young Samuel Barber reveals another way of being a native composer, which is to hark back to the European tradition that is the foundation of American classical music.

To begin this recording, Feldman has created a sort of five-movement cello sonata out of Gershwin’s pieces. The first two are familiar arias-or popular songs, or rather a brilliant melding of both traditions-from *Porgy and Bess*, arranged originally for violin and piano by Jascha Heifetz. “It Ain’t Necessarily So” is a tart, skipping tune that paints the character of Sportin’ Life, the devil-may-care snake of a dope peddler. “My Man’s Gone Now” is Bess’s great tragic aria, a piece essentially operatic and no less a blues. As a complement to those songs and a compliment to his old hero Heifetz, Feldman made his own arrangement of Gershwin’s Three Preludes for cello and piano. These little character pieces, written in the tradition of Chopin, are no less tuneful and bluesy than the operatic songs. The second Prelude recalls the poignancy of Bess’s aria, and the third Prelude ends the set in the lively, jazzy Gershwin-esque spirit the set began with.

Emmanuel Feldman studied at the Curtis Institute, one of whose most celebrated alumni is Samuel Barber, who wrote the Cello Sonata in C Minor, Op. 6, in 1932 at age 22, while visiting

Europe but still a student at Curtis. Born in West Chester, PA, Barber began composing at the age of seven and produced an operetta at ten, on a libretto by his family's Irish cook. A brilliantly precocious talent, he entered Curtis at 14 and in the next years studied composition, piano, and equally importantly, voice. Barber sang professionally in his youth and wrote a good deal of vocal music, and his instrumental work also has a penchant for memorable, singing melody. The most familiar example is his exquisitely lyrical and elegiac *Adagio for Strings*. Barber began his mature creative life as a post-Romantic and never entirely departed from that foundation. By the end his work was touched with Modernism but never consumed by it. When all was said and done, he was a highly individual creator.

The Cello Sonata is full-throated, passionate late-Romantic music with a sense of tragic lyricism from beginning to end--the kind of thing the cello was born to do. In our interview, Feldman said he admires the incredible degree of surging intensity in the opening music of this sonata. The emotion of the first movement is contained in the classical outline of sonata form, the tumultuous first theme followed by a singing, Brahmsian one. After a stormy development and return to C minor, the second theme comes back in C major, a fragile stretch of peace in the movement.

The second movement has an unusual form: a mournful main

theme in the elegiac mode of the *Adagio for Strings* interrupted by a skittering middle section that has, say, a certain frantic gaiety. Just as suddenly, the beautiful melancholy of the first theme returns. The finale ratchets the surging, tumultuous quality of the first movement to a higher level of intensity. There are some touches of hope, but they give way to sorrow and a curt, almost violent ending. Feldman says that above all he wanted to project the youthful fervor of this sonata, and to portray the vivid contrasts in mood from great tenderness to intense passion.

George Walker gave his first piano recital at age 14 and went on to a spectacular academic and performing career that started at Oberlin (from which he graduated first in his class at 18) and moved to Curtis, where his piano teachers included Rudolf Serkin and his composition teacher was Rosario Scalero, who taught Barber. After graduating, Walker went on to break the musical color line in one venue after another: the first black musician to solo with the Philadelphia Orchestra and to get a doctorate from Eastman, among other distinctions. Following Barber's lead with *Adagio for Strings*, Walker took his *Lyric for Strings* out of his first string quartet and it became one of the most performed of American orchestral pieces. He has published over 90 works and recorded widely as a pianist. In 1996 he became the first black American to win the Pulitzer Prize, for his *Lilacs for Voice and Orchestra*.

Feldman considers Walker's Cello Sonata to be one of the lesser-known masterpieces of the American cello repertoire. Like Barber's first movement, Walker's is laid out in traditional sonata form. It begins with a bustling figure in the piano from which the cello's theme rises, with its mingling of nervous energy and wistfulness. That is contrasted with a poignant second theme, perhaps touched both by blues and Brahms. There follows a development with a sense of growing stress and passion that carries into a driving recapitulation. The tone is highly expressive and communicative but, in contrast to the Barber sonata, more urban and 20th-century than Romantic 19th-century. The second movement is a singular and remarkable piece: quiet, minimal, even a touch bleak, but compellingly expressive. Feldman is reminded of Shostakovich here, and there is a distant, melancholy echo of the blues. The nervous quality of the first movement is picked up in the fugal finale, which in its jazz-derived energy forms a steady intensification from beginning to end. Ultimately, the Walker Cello Sonata escapes categories of American or African-American, Romantic or Modern. It is simply and memorably itself.

For the finale of his recording Feldman has chosen to end in high-Americana mode with Aaron Copland's own arrangement of two numbers from his beloved ballet *Billy the Kid*, the result called "Waltz and Celebration." The first is one of Copland's inimitable sweet, lonely, poignant waltzes. Feldman imagines it as a vignette: a cowboy by the fire at sundown picks his guitar and tells somebody a story. "Celebra-

tion" is a rhythmically sprung hoedown, a kind of music that seems entirely realistic and American, but actually in style is a unique and practically whole-cloth invention of Copland's. Meanwhile in their new guise these pieces form another testament from a great composer to a splendid instrument.

—JAN SWAFFORD



Performer Biographies

EMMANUEL FELDMAN

Hailed by John Williams, Grammy award winning composer and conductor, as “an outstanding cellist and truly dedicated artist,” American cellist **Emmanuel Feldman** has emerged as one of the most innovative and expressive cellists of his generation. *Strings Magazine* wrote of a recent CD release “Feldman’s commanding technical prowess, sense of poetry, and identification with the spirit of the music combines...to create a brilliantly enjoyable performance.” Known for his intense, soulful playing and a broad range of repertoire and styles, he enjoys a career as a soloist, chamber musician, recording artist, champion of new music and educator.

From newly commissioned premieres to collaborations with dance and poetry to performing the great classic cello repertoire, Mr. Feldman has joined forces with such artists as the Mark Morris Dance Group, Rebecca Rice Dance, Aurea Ensemble (poetry and music) and renowned pop and jazz artist Bobby McFerrin in creating a new and unexpected concert experience. He has concertized throughout Europe and North

America performing at Carnegie Hall, Symphony Hall, Jordan Hall, The Phillips Collection, Salle Gaveau, Radio France Paris, Franz Liszt Academy Budapest, Altes Rathaus Vienna, and many other venues in Germany, France and Spain. He has appeared as a soloist with the Boston Pops, Nashville Chamber Orchestra, BMOP, New England String Ensemble, Merrimack Valley Philharmonic, Greensboro Festival Orchestra, and Boston Philharmonic among others. Following his debut on the Marquee Celebrity Series of Boston, Richard Dyer of the Boston Globe wrote “Emmanuel Feldman was superb in the Bach Solo Suites.”

An accomplished chamber musician, Mr. Feldman has collaborated with pianists Robert Levin, Randy Hodgkinson, Gilbert Kalish, Joy Cline Phinney, Yehudi Wyner, Jorge Bolet; instrumentalists Paul Newbauer, Richard Stoltzman, Jennifer Frautschi, Karen Gomyo, Lynn Chang, Marcus Thompson, Borromeo String Quartet, members of the Lydian String Quartet and was invited to participate in the Marlboro Music Festival. He recently performed with Rockport Music Festival artistic director and pianist David Deveau in a Rockport opening night performance that is available on Instant Encore as a podcast. He is co-founder of Cello e Basso (formerly the Axiom Duo) with French double bassist Pascale Delache-Feldman. The duo has concertized internationally and has commissioned more than a dozen new works, releasing their first CD on Synergy Classics in 2002. Mr. Feldman has also recorded chamber works for the Naxos, Arsis, Parma, MMC and Zimbel labels.

He has also appeared frequently on radio and television broadcasts in-

cluding WQXR New York, WCRB and WGBH Boston, Radio France and local cable television. His discography, which includes solo cello works, is also strongly represented in chamber music by contemporary and American composers, bringing him high praise for his collaborative skills. His CD on Albany Records as soloist in “Rider on The Plains” featuring Virgil Thomson’s Cello Concerto was nominated for a 2008 Grammy award for producer Blanton Alspaugh (producer of the year) and was hailed as an “excellent new recording...the concerto sounds exhilarating in this bracing and confident performance” by the New York Times.

A consummate advocate of new music, he has given the premieres and first recordings of cello works by composers Richard Danielpour, Michael Gandolfi, John Harbison, Aaron Kernis, David Diamond, Gunther Schuller, Charles Fussell, Jan Swafford, Andrew List, Yakov Yakoulov, John McDonald, Gilbert Trout and many others. Emmanuel’s own musical compositions have been performed by Cello e Basso, the New England String Ensemble and the Warebrook Contemporary Music Festival.

Mr. Feldman is on the cello faculty at New England Conservatory, Tufts University and has a busy private studio in the Boston area. He has taught at the Yellow Barn Music Festival, Heifetz Institute, New York Summer Music Festival, Summit Music Festival, Hartwick Music Festival, Chappaquiddick Music Festival and is on the faculty of the Killington Music Festival.

The son of Juilliard trained parents, he was born into a large musical family of string players and began studying the cello at age 12. He gave his first solo performances with orchestra at age 14 and soon thereafter won the Minnie Rose Award honoring the wife of renowned cellist, Leonard Rose. He studied the cello with Orlando Cole at the Curtis Institute and chamber music with Felix Galimir, Karen Tuttle and Jascha Brodsky. After graduating from Curtis he received a Tanglewood Music Center Fellowship and was awarded a scholarship to study at the Paris Conservatoire Supérieur. He later worked with the Philadelphia and Boston Symphony Orchestras as a part time member and was principal cellist of the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra. Additionally he has studied with cellists Bernard Greenhouse, David Finckel, William Stokking, Stephen Geber, Igor Gavrytch and Amy Camus. For more information please visit www.EmmanuelFeldman.com.



JOY CLINE PHINNEY

Pianist Joy Cline Phinney, a native of Boulder, Colorado, has appeared in solo and chamber music recitals across the United States and in Europe. She holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in piano from The Juilliard School, where she studied with William Masselos, Adele Marcus, and Samuel Sanders, and a Doctor of Ensemble Arts from the Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University, where she studied with Ellen Mack and Robert McDonald.

Joy has collaborated in chamber music concerts, recording projects, and radio and television programs with members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, and St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, among others, and for two decades has appeared annually with headlined artists on the Faculty Showcase concerts at the Sarasota (Florida) Music Festival.

Some of the distinguished artists with whom she has collaborated are James Buswell, Lynn Chang, Marylou Speaker Churchill, Timothy Cobb, Karen Gomyo, Timothy Eddy, Anthony Elliot, Emmanuel Feldman, Vanessa Holroyd, Amadi Azikiwe, Juliette Kang, Alex Kerr, Julie Landsman, Ron Leonard, Lucia Lin, Phillippe Muller, Peter Stumpf, Richard Svoboda, Ann Hobson Pilot, Alan Vogel, Carol Wincenc, William Winstead, Owen Young, and Rebecca Young.

Her CD credits include Albany Records' CD "Rider on the Plains" with cellist Emmanuel Feldman (available at Amazon.com), which was nominated for a 2008 Grammy award for Best Producer, Blanton Alspaugh; a 2009 CD release in Spain with violinist Hsin-Lin Tsai; Joy's performances in 2011 included concerts with Boston Symphony members Lucia Lin and Owen Young on the "Andrew Wolfe" Concert Series. Joy's 2011-2012 season included collaborating in a two-part concert series "El Violin Hispano" at the Tsai Performing Arts Center at Boston University with violinists Miguel Pérez-Espejo Cárdenas and Hsin-Lin Tsai.

Joy made her New York debut in 1990 at Weill Recital Hall with cellist Joshua Gordon. She served as the first Artist-in-Residence and Assistant Director of the Arts Program at the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies in Queenstown, Maryland, and was the inaugural artist in the Tillett Gardens "Arts Alive" concert series in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Whim House Historical Museum series in St. Croix. Several years of repeat performances ensued. Joy resides in the greater Boston area with her husband Chip and twin son and daughter, Lincoln and Lauryn.

Dedication

This recording is dedicated to my wife, double bassist Pascale Delache-Feldman. Without her, I would not be either the cellist or person that I have become today. I also dedicate this great music to my parents Lauretta and Herbert, whose love for music brought them together and who know their apple did not roll too far from the tree!

It is a pleasure to thank both Bob and Linda Williams for their longtime support that has simply been unprecedented in my career. A special thanks to New England Conservatory and the Laurence Lesser and Faculty Profession Development Fund and also to our President, Tony Woodcock, whose inauguration music choice of a Gershwin song from Porgy and Bess inspired me to finish working on the two “Porgy” pieces that are included on this CD.

Additionally, I would like to thank Tarisio Auctions and director Jason Price for their generous loan of the Amaryllis Flemming Antonio Stradivari cello for two fundraising concerts and for their hosting of our New York concert. Also, great thanks as well to the Tonegawa family for the hosting of our Boston concert.

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George Gershwin's Porgy and Bess pieces "It Ain't Necessarily So" and "My Man's Gone Now" transcribed by Jascha Heifetz for Violin is published by Chappell/Intersong Music Group – USA. Gershwin's Three Preludes are published by Alfred Publishing Co. Inc. Samuel Barber's Sonata opus 6 for Violoncello and Piano is published by G. Schirmer, New York/London. George Walker's Sonata for Cello and Piano (1957) is published by MMB Music, Inc. Aaron Copland's Waltz and Celebration from "Billy the Kid" arranged for cello and piano by the composer, cello part edited by Gregor Piatigorsky, published by Boosey and Hawkes, Inc. New York.

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