



Duo Gray-Magamedova

Echoes from the Mountain

Johannes Gray, cello	Anastasiya Magamedova, piano
Sonata for Cello and Piano (1985)	Boris Arapov (1905-1992)
I. Sostenuto	
II. Allegro vivo	
III. Moderato assai	
Five Pieces on Georgian Folk Songs (1950)	Sulkhan Tsintsadze (1925–1991)
The Song of the Black Swan (1917)	Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959)
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Introduction and Polonaise brillante, Op. 3	Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)
Sonata for Solo Cello, Op. 8	Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967)
I. Allegro maestoso ma appassionato	
II. Adagio con gran espressione	
III. Allegro molto vivace	

A lesser-known yet striking voice in Soviet-era music, Boris Arapov's late *Sonata for Cello and Piano* exemplifies his bold harmonic language and structural ingenuity, drawing on his extensive travels through Central and East Asia. The opening *Sostenuto* unfolds with brooding intensity, its spacious sonorities evoking a vast and desolate landscape. The *Allegro vivo* follows with relentless rhythmic drive and biting dissonances, propelling the sonata into dramatic turbulence. Finally, the *Moderato assai* offers a reflective contrast, where searching melodies dissolve into haunting silence.

Georgian composer Sulkhan Tsintsadze was immersed in the musical traditions of his country, blending the expressive ornamentation of Georgian song with the formal clarity of Western classical structures. These five songs distill the essence of Georgia's ancient melodies. Each miniature is a vignette of folk life—wistful lullabies, dances, and the stirring calls of a people whose musical heritage stretches back millennia.

A composer whose music embodies the spirit of Brazil, Heitor Villa-Lobos was influenced by the natural world. The *Song of the Black Swan* is an ethereal, plaintive lyrical depiction of the legendary black swan, whose mournful song, according to myth, signals its final moments before death.

One of his earliest published works, Chopin's *Introduction and Polonaise brillante* is based on a rhythmic folk dance style, the Polonaise, of his native Poland. The work is imbued equally as much with Chopin's inclination towards virtuosity and fantasy. Chopin renewed a sense of nationalism during his whole life, bringing Polish folk melodies and dances to the concert hall.

A fervent champion of Hungarian folk music, Zoltán Kodály infused his compositions with the rhythmic vitality and modal colors of his homeland. His *Sonata for Solo Cello*, composed in 1915, reflects his mastery of lyrical expression and folk-inflected harmonies. Like his compatriot Bela Bartok, Kodaly went into the mountains of his country to collect and catalogue folk songs that he heard sung and played by the villagers. This immense sonata took cello technique to a

new level, demanding performers to be singer and accompanist simultaneously, mimicking a lonely shepherd, a festive village celebration, or a bard telling a noble story.

The **Duo Gray-Magamedova** has captivated audiences across four continents since their formation in 2019. Praised for their "splendidly cohesive interpretations" and "evocative interplay where the two voices echo, imitate, and complement each other exquisitely," the duo has performed throughout Europe, the United States, the Middle East, and Asia.

Known for their innovative programming, Gray and Magamedova specialize in crafting thematic concert experiences—from Fairytales in music to folk-inspired compositions and neoclassical works that reimagine historical traditions. Their Fairytales project will be released by the Franco-Swiss label Aparté in 2026. "Where Music Grows", a feature length documentary about Scandinavian Cello School directed by international award winning Katrine Philp (Good Company Pictures) features the Duo. It was shot over five years, and will premiere at the CPH:DOX film festival in 2026.

"Profound, sensual and sometimes wild, **Johannes Gray's** playing is incandescent" (ResMusica). Following his debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the age of 14, Johannes is a multiple prizewinner of the International JS Bach Competition in Leipzig, won the International Pablo Casals Award, received the Verbier Festival's Prix de l'APCAV award, and was awarded the prestigious "Talent Adami Classique".

Solo engagements have taken him across four continents - including at the Berlin Philharmonie, the festivals of Ravinia and Verbier, Lincoln Center, SuperCello (Beijing), and the Cello Biënnale Amsterdam. He recently gave his concerto debut in New York at Lincoln Center's David Geffen Hall, as well as performing with the Armenian State Orchestra, the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, and the Metamorphosen Berlin Chamber Orchestra. In 2024, he was a featured soloist at the 100th Vienna Philharmonic Ball in the Musikverein. In June 2026, Johannes will debut with the BBC Philharmonic playing Rautavaara's concerto "Towards the Horizon" (2009). Alongside performing, Johannes is assistant professor to Jacob Shaw at the Scandinavian Cello School, where the Duo Gray-Magamedova are SCS Young Artists.

Described by Chicago's Hyde Park Herald as "an explosive force, combining quiet delicacy with thunderous power," **Anastasiya Magamedova** is known for her "sophisticated and thoroughly satisfying renditions" (Cleveland Classical). Critics have highlighted her ability to approach complex works with great mastery, delivering performances of striking intensity, lyrical simplicity, and expressive richness. Winner of the 1st Prize at the Scriabin International Competition in Paris and the 2nd Prize at the ArsClassica International Competition, Magamedova began playing piano at the age of 5 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, and is a graduate of the Juilliard School. She has performed in halls such as Carnegie Hall's Weill Concert Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, and Pierre Boulez Saal in Berlin. A 2016 National YoungArts Winner, Magamedova has also soloed with Alicante Philharmonic Orchestra, Utah Symphony, American West Symphony, and Wratislava Chamber Orchestra. She is currently studying in Paris at the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique and has benefited from mentorship by Gabriela Montero.