

As lonely... as overburdened by vast distances

The musical program, inspired by the quote from the poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926), «As lonely [...] as overburdened by vast distances», features the juxtaposition of masterpieces of piano literature that perfectly represent in music the concepts of return to the past, temporal distance, and solitude, as well as a sense of spirituality understood in all its forms, evoked in the text of the poem *Childhood*.

Rilke's philosophical thought elaborates on solitude as an emblematic aspect of the artist, since, as he also describes in some letters addressed to Kappus and later collected in *Letters to a Young Poet*, solitude is necessary for the maturation of the artist's inner expression.

It proposes a journey that contemplates various eras, cultures, and compositional systems through the idea of distance in both a literal and philosophical sense. The reference to remoteness, directly proposed with the choice of J. S. Bach and authors who were inspired by the past like O. Respighi and O. Messiaen, offers the opportunity to empathize with the sense of distance and solitude, also emphasized by the Lisztian piece that Rilke himself sought out.

Childhood - Rainer Maria Rilke

It would be good to give much thought, before
you try to find words for something so lost,
for those long childhood afternoons you knew
that vanished so completely —and why?

We're still reminded—: sometimes by a rain,
but we can no longer say what it means;
life was never again so filled with meeting,
with reunion and with passing on

as back then, when nothing happened to us
except what happens to things and creatures:
we lived their world as something human,
and became filled to the brim with figures.

And became as lonely as a sheperd
and as overburdened by vast distances,
and summoned and stirred as from far away,
and slowly, like a long new thread,
introduced into that picture-sequence
where now having to go on bewilders us.¹

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936) 16'
Three Preludes on Gregorian Melodie P. 131
I. Molto lento
II. Tempestoso
III. Lento

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) 6'
Regard du silence from *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus*

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) 17'
Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude from *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* S. 173

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) 15'
Italian Concerto in F-Major BWV 971
I.
II. Andante
III. Presto

Lucrezia Liberati, piano

¹ Translation from the German original *Kindheit* by Edward Snow