

George Walker

George Walker was born in Washington, D.C. in 1922. He began to take piano lessons when he was five years old. After graduating from Oberlin College with a Mus. B. degree at age eighteen, he continued his studies at the Curtis Institute of Music with Rudolf Serkin in piano and Rosario Scalero in composition. In 1945, he made his acclaimed New York debut in Town Hall that was sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Efrem Zimbalist. Two weeks later, he appeared with the Philadelphia Orchestra as the soloist in the Rachmaninoff *Piano Concerto No. 3* with Eugene Ormandy conducting.

He appeared subsequently with other major ensembles in performances of the Brahms *Piano Concerto No. 2*, the 4th and 5th *Piano Concertos* of Beethoven, the Tchaikowsky *Piano Concerto No. 1*, and the Franck *Variations for Piano and Orchestra*. In 1950, he became the first black instrumentalist to obtain major concert management. In 1953, he became the first black artist to make a major concert tour of Europe where he played in seven countries – Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and England with outstanding success.

His compositions have been performed by virtually every major orchestra in the United States. Five of his works have been played by the New York Philharmonic which commissioned his *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra*. He has also received commissions from the Cleveland Orchestra, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the New Jersey Symphony, AT&T and many other organizations. He has published over 75 works.

In April of 1996, George Walker received the Pulitzer Prize in Music for

Minor Op. 10 present a consistency of figuration that is unique, i.e. the use of the pentatonic scale near the end of the *G Flat Major Etude*. The *Etude in E Flat Minor*, a melancholic poem, is also a three voice contrapuntal study. The octave *Etude, Op. 25* has an unusual A-B-A structure in which the melodic content of the middle section is expressed also in octaves.

The Chopin *Nocturne, Op. 15 No. 2* utilizes elegant embellishments to its bel canto line. It concludes with a codetta based on a tonic pedal point. The *Toccata* of Francis Poulenc exemplifies the whimsicality and melodic charm that coexist in much of his music.

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Producer and Engineer: George Walker

Editor: Jeff Baust and John Newton of Sound Mirror

Recording equipment: Steinway D piano, Nagra D recorder, Neumann M-149 microphones, Baton cables, Yankee Audio speakers

Piano technician: Sylvester Sammartine

This recording is dedicated to my sons, Gregory and Ian Walker.

Recorded December 1996 in Montclair, New Jersey.

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