

ROBERT SIROTA

COMPOSER

PROGRAM NOTES

VIOLIN SONATA NO. 2: FAREWELL (2013)

Program note by Robert Sirota:

The convergence of experience and inspiration is a mysterious thing. Although I have been a composer for some 50 years, prior to 2011 I had only written one work for violin and piano: back in 2000 I wrote *Summertime*, commissioned by the La Gesse Festival and premiered in Toulouse, France.

Now, over just the past year, I have been privileged to compose two sonatas for violin and piano. The first, commissioned by violinist Hyeyung Julie Yoon, second violinist of the Chiara Quartet, received its premiere in September 2012 at the Sheldon Art Museum in Lincoln, Nebraska. Hyeyung had asked me to compose a work in memory of her grandfather who had recently died.

While completing that work I was asked by Laurie Carney, second violinist of the American String Quartet, to compose a second violin sonata. As I was working on Laurie's piece, within weeks of each other, both her mother and my mother passed away. Where the Sonata No. 1, based on the Latin hymn *Pange Lingua*, is triumphant and celebratory, the Sonata No. 2, which I have subtitled *Farewell*, is imbued with a sense of the personal loss and grief that both Laurie and I are experiencing. I have dedicated this work to our mothers.

The piece is laid out in four movements. The first movement hovers nervously between slow and fast music, finally settling on lyricism over turmoil. The second movement begins with a short soliloquy for violin, which gives way to a scherzo that is more dream-like than jocular. Movement three, "Night Snow," takes its material from wisps of the scherzo, and leads to an elegiac fourth movement, "Farewell."

"O lost, and by the wind grieved, ghost, come back again."
Thomas Wolfe: *Look Homeward, Angel*