

CHRIS ROGERSON

Afterword (2020)

This work was commissioned by the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts and premiered by Paul Huang, Danbi Um, violins, and Orion Weiss, piano, at the Barns at Wolf Trap on February 14, 2020.

Duration: ca. 12 minutes

PROGRAM NOTES

There is something noble, sweeping, and grand about looking back on life, reflecting on life's triumphs, pains, joys, and mysteries. I composed this piece after Jessye Norman's death, and listened to her sublime recording of Strauss's autumnal Four Last Songs frequently. Strauss perfectly captures this feeling of contemplation, especially in the final song "Im Abendrot". In *Afterword*, I make subtle references to this song.

I also composed this piece while reading Hanya Yanagihara's novel *A Little Life*, which is at its core a meditation on life's sweetness and anguish. Without spoiling the novel, one of the characters experiences unimaginable pain. To me there is something particularly poignant about someone who reflects on a difficult life: the shortness of it, how cruel it can be, how ephemeral, how sweet.

Afterword is dedicated to my great friend Jacob.

Chris Rogerson
January 2020