

Gwyneth Walker

*Of Cliffs and Sacred Spaces*

*for Violoncello Duet*



1. Looking Up
2. As a Team – Where Two Can Go
3. Prayer
4. Beyond Time and Space

## This Stillness

This stillness, solitude, wildness of Nature  
Is like an herb,  
or food to my intellect.  
This is what I go out to seek.  
It is as if I always met in those places  
Some grand, serene, immortal,  
Infinitely encouraging, though invisible,  
companion.  
We walked together as one.

– *Henry David Thoreau*

# *Of Cliffs and Sacred Spaces*

*duration: 9:45*

**Of Cliffs and Sacred Spaces** is inspired by the Vedauwoo rock formations in Eastern Wyoming. These spectacular outcroppings are considered to be sacred places. The Arapaho Indians refer to this as the *Land of the Earthborn Spirit*. Native Americans have come here on their vision quests.

The four movements of this cello duet reflect the various ways that visitors might experience Vedauwoo:

from the base, one looks up in wonderment at the magnificent rocks

adventurers, in teams of two, may climb the rock faces

prayer is always part of the sacred rocks

and, at the height of the summit, one has reached a place beyond time and space

Commissioned by Cellists Beth Vanderborgh  
(University of Wyoming, Laramie) and  
Amy Frost Baumgarten  
(Kennedy Center Opera Orchestra)

Premiered at Bethany Lutheran Church in Denver, CO  
on September 8, 2023

# Of Cliffs and Sacred Spaces

for Violoncello Duet

Gwyneth Walker

## 1. Looking Up

At a gentle, thoughtful pace ( $\text{♩} = 66$ )

The musical score is written for two violoncellos, I and II, in a 2/2 time signature with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The tempo is marked 'At a gentle, thoughtful pace' with a quarter note equal to 66 beats per minute. The score consists of ten measures. In measure 1, Violoncello I has a whole rest, while Violoncello II begins with a half note G2, followed by a half note G3. The dynamic is *p*. A performance instruction 'a barren landscape, dry tone' is placed above the first measure. In measure 2, Violoncello I has a whole rest, and Violoncello II continues with a half note A3, followed by a half note B3. A performance instruction '(tremoli suggestive of maracas)' is placed above the second measure. Measures 3 and 4 show the continuation of the melodic line in Violoncello II. Measure 5 is a repeat of measure 1. Measure 6 is a repeat of measure 2. Measure 7 is a repeat of measure 1. Measure 8 is a repeat of measure 2. Measure 9 is a repeat of measure 1. Measure 10 is a repeat of measure 2. A section marker 'A' is placed above measure 9. The dynamic *mf* is indicated at the beginning of measure 9. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

13

I

II

16

**B**

I

II

*mf*

19

I

II

22

I

II

25

**C**

I

II

28

I

II

31

I

II

34

I

II

37 **D**

I

*p*  
rolled pizz.

II

*p*

41

I

II

*arco*

**E** *very rhythmic*

44

Part I: Bass clef, B-flat major. Measures 44-46 feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with slurs and ties. Part II: Bass clef, B-flat major. Measures 44-46 feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with slurs and ties.

47

Part I: Bass clef, B-flat major. Measures 47-49 feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with slurs and ties. Part II: Bass clef, B-flat major. Measures 47-49 feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with slurs and ties. Dynamic marking: *cresc. poco a poco* in both parts.

50

Part I: Bass clef, B-flat major. Measures 50-52 feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with slurs and ties. Part II: Bass clef, B-flat major. Measures 50-52 feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with slurs and ties. Dynamic marking: *f* in both parts.

53 **F**

Part I: Treble clef, B-flat major. Measures 53-55 feature a melodic line with slurs and ties. Part II: Bass clef, B-flat major. Measures 53-55 feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with slurs and ties. Dynamic marking: *f* in both parts.

56

Part I: Treble clef, B-flat major. Measures 56-58 feature a melodic line with slurs and ties. Part II: Bass clef, B-flat major. Measures 56-58 feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with slurs and ties. Dynamic marking: *f* in both parts.



59 G

62

65 *poco rit.*

68 *Slightly slower and rit. to end*  
*separate, lightly climbing*

71 *(rit.)*

*(dim.)* *gliss.* *p* *pizz.*

*(dim.)* *gliss.* *p* *pizz.*

## 2. As a Team – Where Two Can Go

**Energetic** (♩ = 144 or faster)  
*gathering energy*  
(players answer one another, as a climbing team of two)

*with strength*

The musical score is written for two bassoon parts, I and II, in a 4/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The tempo is marked 'Energetic' with a quarter note equal to 144 or faster. The performance instructions include 'gathering energy' and 'with strength', with a note that 'players answer one another, as a climbing team of two'. The score is divided into five systems:

- System 1 (Measures 1-4):** Part I starts with a *p* dynamic, playing a sequence of quarter notes. Part II enters in the second measure with a *p* dynamic. Both parts end with a *mf* dynamic in the fourth measure.
- System 2 (Measures 5-8):** Labeled with a boxed 'A' above measure 5. Part I has accents (^) on measures 5, 6, and 7. Part II has a *mf* dynamic in measure 5 and accents on measures 7 and 8.
- System 3 (Measures 9-12):** Part I has accents on measures 9, 10, and 11. Part II has accents on measures 9, 10, and 11.
- System 4 (Measures 13-16):** Labeled with a boxed 'B' above measure 13. Part I starts with a *p* dynamic and features a triplet of eighth notes in measures 14 and 15. Part II also starts with a *p* dynamic and features a triplet of eighth notes in measures 14 and 15.
- System 5 (Measures 17-20):** Part I has a *cresc.* marking in measure 18 and accents on measures 19 and 20. Part II has a *cresc.* marking in measure 18, a *f* dynamic in measure 19, and a *(gliss./trem.)* marking in measure 20.

21 **C**

I

II

*f*

25 **D**

I

II

*p*

29

I

II

33

I

II

*f*

*p (echo)*

*rit.*

*p (echo)*

**E** Slower (♩ = 108) *gracefully*  
(a time for reflection)

37

I

II

*p*

*pp*

*poco*

*sul pont.*  
*(silvery tremolo)*

42 **F**

*(sul pont.)*  
*pp* *poco*

47

*ord.* *f*

53 **G**

*p*

59 **H**

*mf*

65 *rit.*

*cresc.* *f*

73 **I** Tempo I (♩ = 144 or faster)

77 **J**

81

86

89 Slower, deliberately climbing

molto rit.\*

\*The final step as the climbing team joins together at the summit.  
Walker | *Of Cliffs and Sacred Spaces* | 2. As a Team – Where Two Can Go



25

I

II

30

I

II

**B**

*p cresc. poco a poco (to C)*

*p cresc. poco a poco (to C)*

35

I

II

*(cresc.)*

*(cresc.)*

39

I

II

*poco rit.*

**C** *a tempo*

*(cresc.)*

*f espr.*

*(cresc.)*

*f espr.*

43

I

II

*lightly separate*

3 3 3

47

I

II

3 3 3

51

55 **D**

*p with delicate intensity*

*p with delicate intensity*

60

*rit.*

64 **E** *a tempo*

68

*dim. to end*

*dim. to end*

*rolled pizz.*

\*One could end here (with a complete fade out)



## 4. Beyond Time and Space

Moderate tempo ( $\text{♩} = 112$ )  
with the image of reaching up to the sky

The musical score is written for two bass staves, labeled I and II, in 4/4 time. The tempo is moderate, with a quarter note equal to 112 beats per minute. The piece is marked with a first ending bracket (I) and includes performance instructions such as *p* (piano), *lightly separate*, *arco* (with bow), and *poco cresc.* (a little crescendo). The score is divided into five systems, each starting with a measure number (1, 5, 9, 13, 17). The first system (measures 1-4) features a *p* dynamic and *lightly separate* instruction. The second system (measures 5-8) includes *poco cresc.* and *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamics. The third system (measures 9-12) is marked *mf*. The fourth system (measures 13-16) continues the *mf* dynamic. The fifth system (measures 17-20) begins with a boxed letter 'A' above measure 17. The notation includes slurs, accents, and dynamic markings throughout.

21 *rit.* **Slower**

**B** Start slowly and accel. poco a poco (to C)

25 Tap on body of Cello

*p cresc. poco a poco (to C)*

*lightly, rhythmically*

*p cresc. poco a poco (to C)*

29 (*accel.*)

*(cresc.)*

*(cresc.)*

33 (*accel.*)

*(cresc.)*

*(cresc.)*

37 *finger tremolo* *arco*

*(cresc.)*

*(cresc.)*

**C** Tempo I (♩ = 112)

41

*f* (full sound)

*f* (full sound)

44

47

**D**

50

*rit. to end*

54 (rit.)

*dim. to end*

*dim. to end*