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PERFORMING ARTS

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Walden Chamber Players

How is one to respond to a piece of music conceived as the soundscape of an intensely personal and spiritual inner world? Sofia Asgatovna Gubaidulina's 1980 "Garden of Joys and Sorrows" for flute, viola and harp is such a piece, and three members of the Walden Chamber Players made it the centerpiece of their program at the Corcoran Gallery on Friday.

Outwardly, it's crafted in a language that is all Gubaidulina's own, full of slides up and down individual harp strings, long eerie passages of viola harmonics, laced with quarter tones and a slowly developing flute part that is firmly anchored in more recognizable flute idioms. Its colors run the gamut from the muted hues of the early impressionists to the brilliance of Stravinsky, and it projects a quiet but powerful intensity. Clearly, however, Gubaidulina intends a deeper message than this, and to perceive it fully, perhaps you already have to inhabit the spiritual world she lives in.

Flutist Marianne Gedigian, violist Christof Huebner and harpist Franziska Huhn took it (and all its technical quirks) on, with a reassuring poise that avoided any hint of trickiness or difficulty.

The rest of the program offered a nicely structured frame for Gubaidulina's trio. There was the Elegiac Trio for Flute, Viola and Harp by Arnold Bax in a sort of Cesar Franck idiom, an agreeable Duo for Flute and Viola by the 18th-century François Devienne, and Debussy's late and intensely crafted Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp, all given splendid readings.

– Joan Reinthaler