



# SOLACE

KORKMAZ CAN SAĞLAM

WINNER OF THE 2022 ALEXIS GREGORY VENDOME PRIZE

# SOLACE

*Solace* is a representation of my search in finding comfort in music. I believe in the healing quality of music, how it can provide relief and take us to a better place during difficult times in our lives. This album is not a collection of soothing pieces, but rather works which made me confront my thoughts and feelings, and eventually helped me to make peace with them. I hope to inspire, evoke thoughts and feelings through this powerful music which had an enormous impact on my musical and personal journey.

- |             |   |       |
|-------------|---|-------|
| <b>1-6.</b> | <b>Suite in D minor, HWV 428 (1720)</b><br><i>George Friderick Handel</i>   |       |
| I.          | Prelude   | 1:02  |
| II.         | Allegro (Fugue)   | 2:28  |
| III.        | Allemande   | 2:06  |
| IV.         | Courante  | 1:02  |
| V.          | Air & 5 Variations  | 4:03  |
| VI.         | Presto  | 1:57  |
| <b>7-9.</b> | <b>Piano Sonata No.1 in D minor, Op.28 (1908)</b><br><i>Sergei Rachmaninoff</i>   |       |
| I.          | Allegro Moderato  | 12:31 |
| II.         | Lento   | 8:41  |
| III.        | Allegro Molto   | 13:53 |
| <b>10.</b>  | <b>In the Silence of the Secret Night,<br/>Op.4 No.3 from 6 Romances (1893)</b><br><i>Sergei Rachmaninoff (tran. Earl Wild)</i> | 2:42  |
| <b>11.</b>  | <b>Bozlak (2023)</b><br><i>Ilayda Deniz Oğuz</i>  | 6:20  |

# Why This Recording?

For me, recording in a studio is a new means of expression, and a discovery. I think every musician dreams of their first album, their chance to share with a larger audience what they have to say as an artist after years of learning. When I was given this opportunity after winning the Vendome Prize, I knew that the most important thing is to present music that touches me, inspires me and - hopefully - will move the listener. I am very grateful that Vendome trusted me with this project and made it possible to work with the most amazing team at Sono Luminus.

Being a winner of the Vendome Prize has a special meaning that goes back to my teenage years. I was immediately drawn to this competition, which I followed from its earlier editions. As I was listening to the previous laureates, I was deeply engaged by their unique and strong personalities. When I decided to participate myself, I wanted to make sure not to copy others but rather play a program full of music that unveils my own artistic credo.

I have been living with these works by Handel and Rachmaninoff for many years now. I did not necessarily play them on stage, but from the first time I heard them they spoke to me, and I knew that, sooner or later, I had to leave my own mark on them. Still, while thinking of the repertoire for this recording, I felt that something was missing: I wanted to include music from my own country, Turkey, which I love so much, but I did not want it to be anything that has been recorded before. And so came the idea of commissioning my dearest composer and friend, Ilayda Deniz Oğuz, to write an original work ("*Bozlak*") for this project. I am truly honored that she chose to dedicate this piece to me. It is a dark work, inspired by a Turkish folk song, and I think it complements the other pieces on this album really well.

I am also very grateful to the people without whom this recording could not have happened: Vendome Artistic Director Matei Varga, *Sono Luminus'* CEO Collin Rae, and the amazing team of producer Dan Merceruio, recording engineer Daniel Shores, piano technician John Veitch and designer Joshua Frey.

# Korkmaz Can Sağlam

Turkish pianist KCS is the Grand Prize winner of the 2022 Alexis Gregory Vendome Prize, where he was also awarded the Recording Prize.

Can Sağlam has performed in concert halls such as the Morgan Library & Museum's Gilder Lehrman Hall in New York, Wiener Saal in Salzburg, Verbrugghen Hall in Sydney and in other venues in cities such as Paris, Nice, Brussels, Cleveland, Verona and Istanbul. He has appeared in festivals such as the Gümüslük Classical Music Festival, Antalya Piano Festival and Bellapais Music Festival. This season, he will appear at the 2024 Sydney Festival as the winner of The Rex Hobcroft People's Choice Prize at the Sydney International Piano Competition, as well as in concerts with the Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by James Judd and New Manhattan Sinfonietta conducted by Gürer Aykal.

Born in 1999 in Ankara, he began his musical education with Gamze Kirtıl at the Bilkent University's Music and Ballet Primary School at the age of seven. After studying with Antonio Pompa-Baldi and Sergei Babayan at the Cleveland Institute of Music, he received his bachelor's degree from

The Juilliard School, where he was a recipient of the Ahmet Erteğün Memorial Scholarship and the Susan W. Rose Piano Fellowship twice.

In 2018, he was accepted as a scholar of "Young Musicians on World Stages" (YMWS), led by Güher-Süher Pekinel. During his studies, he has had the chance to work with musicians such as Jacques Rouvier, Pavel Gililov, Boris Berman, Ilya Itin, Michel Beroff, Jean-Francois Heisser, Gabriela Montero and Emanuel Ax.

He is currently pursuing graduate studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music under the direction of Maestro Babayan.

# Why This Program?

When one thinks of Handel, his operas (and particularly his long arias!) quickly come to mind; but the keyboard suites, which are much less known, were such an incredible discovery for me. I was immediately struck by the improvisatory nature of the Suite No.3 in D Minor, from the Eight Great Suites. There is so much freedom and beauty in the *Air with Variations*, such elegance in the *Allemande*, such excitement and flow in the *Fugue*, *Courante*, and *Presto*!

The core of the album is the First Piano Sonata by Rachmaninoff, *Op.28*. When I first heard this work, it did not sound like anything else I knew; the melancholy, passion, drive and intensity all felt like a story in itself. For many years after that, I just kept listening to it instead of playing it. When I did decide to finally learn it, I knew exactly what I wanted to do with each phrase, and it was a matter of learning the notes.

As an afterthought, Earl Wild's transcription of the song '*In the Silence of the Secret Night*', explores the lyrical side of Rachmaninoff, combined with the virtuosity and the imagination of Wild.

The final piece on the album is "*Bozlak*" by Ilayda Deniz Oğuz, whom I have known since I was 12. Growing up together, seeing her unique compositional language take form, and now recording a piece by her, is incredibly special. Here, she combines her compositional style with the Turkish folk song "*Bozlak*", a word which means *to cry out or to yell*. This passionate outburst seeps through the piece's gloomy nature, something achieved by juxtaposing different techniques (such as muting) with a more lyrical side.

With this selection of pieces that cover centuries, I hope to take you on this journey and expose you to the great power of this music.

- Korkmaz Can Saglam, 12/30/2023

# The Vendome Prize

The purpose of the Alexis Gregory Vendome Prize is to seek out, reward, support, and guide future professional artists who are technically perfect, magnetic, original, ambitious, in possession of a large repertoire, and ready to undertake the challenges of a performing career. Throughout the years the prize has built an enviable reputation of discovering extraordinary talent and bringing it to the attention of the music world. Many of the pianists who first triumphed at Vendome have gone on to win major awards and now have resonant international careers, among them Yekwon Sunwoo, Yevgeny Sudbin, Denis Kozhukhin, Boris Giltburg and Giuseppe Albanese.

Created by the late art historian and collector Alexis Gregory, the first Vendome Prize took place at the UNESCO Palace in Paris in November 2000. Over the next 23 years, Vendome established successful partnerships with the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon (2003 - 2009) and The Verbier Festival in Switzerland (2014 - 2019).

In February 2023, the Alexis Gregory Foundation entered into partnership with the Mannes School of Music following a grant made to The New School's College of Performing Arts. Mannes will manage, host, and present the competition for at least the next five years.



**Producer & Editing Engineer:** Dan Merceruio

**Recording, Mixing, & Mastering Engineer:** Daniel Shores

**Photography:** Jiyang Chen

**Liner Notes:** Korkmaz Can Sağlam

**Assistant Engineer & Graphic Design:** Joshua Frey

**Executive Producers:** Collin J. Rae, Matei Varga

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Boyce VA 22602

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