ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE SOLOISTIC VIOLA:
SELECTED TWENTIETH CENTURY
VIOLA WORKS BY EUROPEAN AND
AMERICAN COMPOSERS

Yoon-Hee Kwon, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2004

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Considered a magnificent instrument for chamber music since the
eighteenth century, the viola nevertheless had difficulty establishing itself
as a solo instrument. Its rich, sandy tone and middle range, indeed the
very qualities that make it an ideal chamber music partner, historically
deterred composers from placing the viola in the spotlight. Early violas
were constructed with short necks in proportion to their size, making
position playing extremely difficult, if not impossible. Further, oversized
violas of the day greatly restricted the player’s technical dexterity and
limited the composer’s efforts to exploit the instrument’s resources.

During the second half of the 18th Century, some violin virtuosos wanted
to demonstrate their skills on viola, so violinmakers started making
smaller violas. This resulted in a number of viola concertos written by viola player/composers. Stamitz, Mozart, Dittersdorf, and Hoffmeister provided the violist with masterworks in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Solo compositions by Brahms, Berlioz, and Schumann represent the nineteenth century and bring the violist to more fertile fields, musically and technically. It has only been in the twentieth century, however, that the viola has come into its own as a solo instrument.

The three dissertation recitals for this project present eleven works written by selected American & European composers in the twentieth century who made major contributions viola solo literature. In each case, they had close relationships with virtuoso violists and were influenced by them.

Recital repertoire choices represent 20th Century Viola repertoire in 3 primary ways:

1. Media: The selections include representative works for
   A. Solo Viola
   B. Viola with Piano
   C. Viola with other instruments

2. Musical styles: The selections present a variety of musical styles and languages

3. Composers of varying degree of prominence.
From a large number of possible works under initial consideration (over 300 sonatas, 650 solo pieces, etc.), recital programs were constructed to include the above features while also considering each work's length, character, key, comparative difficulty, and how the works appealed to the author/performer.
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BY EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN COMPOSERS

by

Yoon-Hee Kwon

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland, College park in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts 2004

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Compact Disk #1: Recital performed on May 8, 2002, 5:30pm
in Gildenhorn Recital Hall
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

Collaborating Artists: Victor Asuncion, Piano
Jessica Dunnavant, Flute
Ching-Ju Cheng, Harp

1. Alan Shulman (1915-2002)
   Theme and variations for viola and orchestra (1940)
   (Piano reduction by the composer)

2. Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)
   Sonata for Solo viola Op.11, no.5 (1919)
   Lebhaft, aber nicht gecilt
   Maßig schnell, mit viel Warne vorgetragen
   Scherzo
   In form und Zeitmaß einer passacaglia

3. Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
   Trio for Flute, Harp, and Viola (1910)
   Pastorale
   Interlude
   Final

Compact Disk #2: Recital performed on February 8, 2003, 5:30pm
in Gildenhorn Recital Hall
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

Collaborating Pianist: Victor Asuncion

1. Vincent Persichetti (1915-1976)
   *Reflections on a poem by Wallace Stevens*

2. Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
   Lachrymae for Viola and Piano Op.48 (1950)
   *Reflections on a song of Dowland*
3. Herald Genzmer (b.1909)
   Sonata for Viola solo (1958)
   Moderato
   Tranquillo
   Burleske. Prestissimo
   Final

4. Darius Milhaud (1892-1974)
   Sonata No.2 for Viola and Piano (1944)
   Champetre
   Dramatique
   Rude

Compact Disk #3: Recital performed on April 5, 2004, 5:30pm
in Gildenhorn Recital Hall
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

Collaborating Pianists: Sara Rosado
Hiroko Yamazaki
Eunae Ko

1. Bohuslav Martinu (1890-1959)
   Sonata No.1 for Viola and Piano (1955)
   Poco andante-moderato
   Allegro non troppo

2. George Rochberg (b.1918)
   Sonata for Viola and Piano (1979)
   Allegro moderato
   Adagio lamentoso
   Fantasia: Epilogue

3. Elliott Carter (b.1908)
   Elegy for Viola and Piano (1943)

4. Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)
   Sonata for Viola and Piano Op.11, No.4 (1919)
   Fantaisie
   Allegro appassionato
   Andante con moto