

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: **THREE TWENTIETH CENTURY VIOLA VIRTUOSOS:
MUSIC WRITTEN FOR THEM AND BY THEM**

Sungah Min, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2005

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This performance project treated three twentieth century viola virtuosos: Lionel Tertis (1876-1975), William Primrose (1904-1982), and Paul Hindemith (1895-1963). The viola did not become highly regarded as a solo instrument until the twentieth century. This breakthrough came largely as a result of these three virtuosos. They raised the status of the viola as a solo instrument and were influential in creating many new works now firmly established in the viola repertoire.

Tertis developed a highly encouraging environment for the viola as a solo instrument in England through virtuosity and creativity as a performer. The viola was gradually accepted by English composers and conductors as an instrument worthy of performance opportunities. The result was a growing of the English school of viola playing from 1910 until the Second World War.

Tertis' most important successor, Primrose, was recognized as the leading violist of his day. Primrose wanted to expand the literature available to violists. As a result he

arranged, transcribed, and edited many works both for himself and for all aspiring violists; in addition, he inspired and commissioned original compositions by leading contemporary composers.

Hindemith's greatest contributions to the viola are his compositions, of which over twenty were written for the instrument. Through the premiere of *Sonata for Viola and Piano*, Op. 11, No. 4, Hindemith began his career as a concert violist and a highly significant composer of music for the instrument. As a viola soloist, he did not limit his repertoire to his own works. He premiered William Walton's *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra*, which was dedicated to Tertis, and Darius Milhaud's *Viola Concerto*, Op. 108.

For this dissertation project, compositions written for these three artists and by them were studied and performed on three recitals. Through the performance of the works, being core of the mainstream viola repertoire, the virtuosos' contributions to the viola literature were once again recognized.

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MUSIC WRITTEN FOR THEM BY THEM

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CD</u>	<u>Track</u>
CD I: Works Written by Paul Hindemith	
Trauermusik for Viola and String Orchestra.....	1
Sonata for Viola and Piano, op. 11, No. 4.....	2-4
“Der Schwanendreher” – for Viola and Small Orchestra.....	5-7
CD II: Works Dedicated to Lionel Tertis	
R. Vaughan Williams – Suite for Viola and Orchestra.....	1-8
Arnold Bax – Sonata for Viola and Piano.....	9-11
York Bowen – Sonata for Viola and Piano No. 2 in F Major.....	12-14
CD III: Works Dedicated to William Primrose	
George Rochberg – Sonata for Viola and Piano.....	1-3
Bela Bartok – Concerto for Viola and Orchestra.....	4-6