

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
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**Recital performed on May 8, 2002, 5:30pm
in Gildenhorn Recital Hall
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center**

**Collaborating Artists: Victor Asuncion, Piano
Jessica Dunnivant, 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 geeilt
Maßig schnell, mit viel Wärme 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)
Infanta Marina for Viola and Piano Op.83 (1960)
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

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