Journal of the American Viola Society

volume 30 Number 1

Features:

41st Viola Congress Review

The Viola Music of Robert Cobert

Laforge and the Paris Conservatory

Takemitsu's *A Bird came down the Walk*

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Journal of the American Viola Society

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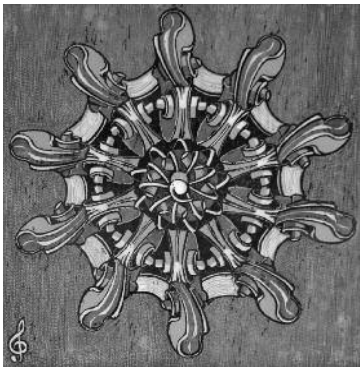
Contents

On the Cover:

Martha Briana *Kaleidoscope for Viola*
Reduction Woodcut on Rice Paper. 17 x 17 inches



Martha Briana is an artist from Belfast, Maine, who is currently pursuing a Master's degree in printmaking at Southern Illinois University. This woodcut is a collage of her drawings, featuring a repeated pattern of a scroll motif. To view more of her musical-themed art, please visit: marthabriana.net.

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From the Editor

I learned about crowdfunding in November 2010, after reading an article in *International Musician*. The concept sounded intriguing, and the first project that I backed was a musical written by a composer and lyricist here in Houston (neither of whom I knew; but I liked the project and the local connection). Since that time, I have contributed to more than two dozen diverse projects across many platforms. If you have ever considered running your own campaign, this issue's Student Life department is just for you, featuring perspectives from three violists who have run successful crowdfunding campaigns. In addition to the reasons listed there as to why people contribute (Passion, Perk, Participation, and Pride), I am perhaps most inspired that people are going out on a limb to try new and creative means of fulfilling their dreams. This issue features many articles on the theme of people who have dared to pursue a dream, even if it bucked conventional wisdom:

- The relatively new Polish Viola Society decided to undertake the herculean task of hosting a viola congress this past September. Andrew Filmer writes about the results.

- Violist John Peskey dared to ask his childhood idol, the composer Robert Cobert, to compose a concerto for viola and orchestra. The result was not one, but four new works for viola—and an enduring friendship.

- After a couple of false starts, the Paris Conservatory made the radical decision to establish a viola class in 1893. Nora Hamme provides a brief overview of the substantial contributions of their first teacher, Théophile Laforge.

- In 1966, with no specific prospect of a performance, the young composer John Biggs was motivated by Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Suite for Viola and Small Orchestra* to write a concerto himself for viola and small orchestra. Biggs reflects on the work's subsequent reception and the other viola music in his catalog in our Retrospective department.

- Inspired by the performances at the 2012 Viola Congress, three young Eastman graduates decided to form a viola trio and enter into chamber-music competitions. Read all about their journey in our With Viola in Hand department.

This issue also features the first-prize winner of our 2013 Dalton Viola Research Competition, Julie Michael, who looks at Tōru Takemitsu's *A Bird came down the Walk*; another variation on the theme of "bucking conventionality in pursuit of a dream." And speaking of variations on a theme, David Wallace teaches the basics of improvising your own variations on a popular theme in our Eclectic Violist department.

Lastly, this issue includes an In memoriam for John White. Known for his many contributions to the viola world including hosting four viola congresses, helping to establish the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition, writing the definitive biography of Lionel Tertis, and editing many British viola compositions for publication, John truly went out on a limb and bucked conventional perceptions of the viola. We are all the richer from his many endeavors.

Cordially,

David M. Bynog
JAVS Editor

The David Dalton Viola Research Competition Guidelines

The *Journal of the American Viola Society* welcomes submissions for the David Dalton Viola Research Competition for university and college student members of the American Viola Society.

General Guidelines:
Entries must be original contributions to the field of viola research and may address issues concerning viola literature, history, performers, and pedagogy. Entries must not have been published in any other publication or be summaries of other works. The body of the work should be 1500–3500 words in length and should adhere to standard criteria for a scholarly paper. For more details on standard criteria for a scholarly paper, please consult one of these sources:

Bellman, Jonathan D. *A Short Guide to Writing about Music*. 2nd ed. New York: Pearson, 2007.
Herbert, Trevor. *Music in Words: A Guide to Writing about Music*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
Wingell, Richard J. *Writing about Music: An Introductory Guide*. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2009.

Entries should include relevant footnotes and bibliographic information and may include short musical examples. Papers originally written for school projects may be submitted but should conform to these guidelines; see judging criteria for additional expectations of entries. Any questions regarding these guidelines or judging criteria should be sent to info@avsnationaloffice.org.

Judging:
A panel of viola scholars will evaluate submissions and then select a maximum of three winning entries.
Entries will be judged according to scholarly criteria including statement of purpose, thesis development, originality and value of the research, organization of materials, quality of writing, and supporting documentation.

Submission:
Entries must be submitted electronically using Microsoft Word by May 15, 2014. For the electronic submission form, please visit http://americanviolasociety.org/competitions/dalton/.

Prize categories:
All winning entries will be featured in the *Journal of the American Viola Society*, with authors receiving the following additional prizes:

1st Prize:	$400, sponsored by Thomas and Polly Tatton
2nd Prize:	$200
3rd Prize:	Henle edition sheet music package including works by Schumann, Reger, Stamitz, Mendelssohn, and Bruch, donated by Hal Leonard Corporation

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David Dalton Viola Research Competition Entry Form

Please include the following information with your submission to the David Dalton Viola Research Competition. Be sure to include address and telephone information where you may be reached during summer.

Name _____

Current Address _____

Telephone _____ Email address_____

Permanent Address _____

University/College _____

Academic Level: Fr / So / Jr / Sr / Grad

Topic _____ Word Count _____

Current AVS member? Yes / No
If you are not a current AVS member, please join AVS by including $23 student membership dues with your submission, along with a membership enrollment form, which can be found in the current issue of JAVS.

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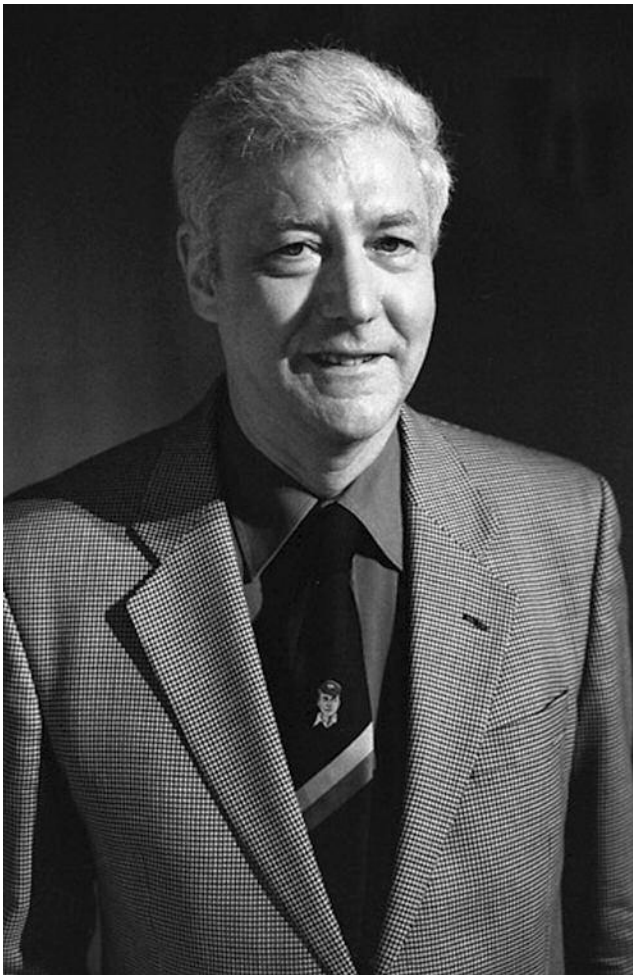
In Memoriam



John White (photo courtesy of Dwight Pounds)

John White Remembered

Collected and edited by Dwight Pounds

[Editor's Note: John White—violist, educator, author, music editor, and advocate for the viola—passed away on December 1, 2013, after a lengthy illness. We present here several tributes from his friends and colleagues.]

Tully Potter: RIP JOHN WHITE (1938–2013), founding member of the Alberni Quartet, longtime Professor of Viola at the Royal Academy of Music (and at one time head of instrumental studies), co-founder of the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition on the Isle of Man, and in general one of the great friends of the viola. John died on December 1, 2013, at St. Clare's Hospice, Harlow. He had lived at Harlow in Essex since the Alberni Quartet went there as the new town's resident ensemble. John wrote a biography of Tertis, a book about British violists, and a book about Yorkshire cricket, which was published only recently. Among the composers he worked with were Benjamin Britten, Alan Rawsthorne, Alan Bush, and Gordon Jacob. For a number of years John and his wife Carol organized little weekend viola festivals at the arts center near their home.

David Dalton: One sees a person of his humble beginnings (as he himself indicated), musically even somewhat unpromising, rise above all that to make a major contribution to the world of his beloved instrument. He became one of Britain's, and Europe's, leading pedagogues, inspiring and rallying a multitude of loyal students around him. But his influence on inspiring violists transcended the studio when one considers the many hundreds from various corners of the world who have been the beneficiaries of the Tertis International Viola Competition. May we ardently hope that the administration of this event has been reliably ensconced in the hands of John's faithful supporters so that it will be perpetuated. Perhaps that would prove to be his most lasting legacy to violists.

If these accomplishments weren't enough, John's protean nature allowed him effective use not only of the bow, but the pen as well. His devotion to Lionel Tertis prompted him to bring to light and edit some of that great master's arrangements. Other editions of English composers have been made accessible to violists through John's enterprise. Then there are the

books: those on British violists and the comprehensive biography of Tertis himself. And cricket? I wondered at times where John summoned the time and energy that the research, writing, and publication of those volumes represented? We honor Carol, as well, for her supportive and telling role in her husband's noteworthy achievements.

Dwight Pounds: His dignity and dedication to the tasks at hand, whether in behalf of the viola or for cricket, were something to behold, evidenced not only by his books and editions of British viola music, but by the herculean task of having organized four international viola congresses. He is the only person to date to attempt—much less accomplish—such a feat.

There is this to remember as John White's ashes are committed back to the precious soil of Yorkshire: he stood too tall, his shadow was too long, and his voice too strong to be contained by muted earth. Any time I read from *Lionel Tertis* or the *Anthology*, his voice will be heard with each word. If I glance at Melanie Stover's portrait of John holding his Tertis biography, he will speak to me in his own hand, "To my 'old' friend. . . ." When I hear performances of twentieth-century British viola music—Anthony Collins, Margaret Hubicki, Alan Rawsthorne, Kenneth Harding, Gordon Jacob, into which he breathed new life well into his final illness—John will be holding the instrument and bow . . . though he never played a single note in my presence. As long as the history of our instrument endures, John White will be remembered as one of the great servants of the viola, and I rather imagine that it will be remembered in Great Britain so long as a single viola player remains alive in the country.

Ann Frederking: I first met John White in 1991 at the Ithaca Viola Congress and subsequently saw him at several more congresses and viola events. He knew the major players in the British viola world and had endless stories about them. His contributions to the viola may be unparalleled, and he will be greatly missed.

Thomas Tatton: When John traveled around the countryside coaching and otherwise working with youthful violists, he always put a smile on their faces with his kind and helpful comments—all will miss that now. I know his true love was always teaching, and there are cadres of young, and not so young, who benefited from his teaching. And many former students now carry on his personal, individual, and professional approach.

Martin Outram: John has been a major figure in my life, and it has always been a great privilege to be his student, friend, and colleague. Like so many others, I held him in the highest possible esteem. Countless musicians the world over will remain grateful to John for all he achieved and for his enduring inspiration to us all.

Uta Lenkewitz-von Zahn: Your friends from two continents gather around to thank you again for all that you have done for MUSIC, especially for the VIOLA and for all musicians around the world by your books and your teaching. You have used the

International Viola Congresses Organized/Hosted by John White

Congress No.	Location	Dates	Host(s)
IVC VI	London, England	June 9–11, 1978	John White and Nannie Jamieson
IVC XII	Isle of Man, UK	August 22–27, 1984	John White
IVC XXII	Isle of Man, UK	August 24–28, 1994	John White
IVC XXVI	Glasgow, Scotland	July 16–19, 1998	John and Carol White and Jimmy and Dawn Durrant

The Alberni String Quartet, from left to right: Dennis Simons, Gregory Baron, John White, and Howard Davis

time of your life to serve the beauty of music, and by that you have served many, many people. With thanks from a full heart for your friendship to the German Viola Society.

Major Book Publications by John White

An Anthology of British Viola Players. Colne, UK: Comus Edition, 1997. (Reviewed in *JAVS* vol. 15, no. 2, p. 45.)

Lionel Tertis: The First Great Virtuoso of the Viola. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2006; paperback edition, 2012. (Reviewed in *JAVS* vol. 24, no. 1, p. 43.)

Recollections of a Yorkshire Violist (incomplete at the author's death).

Those Were the Days: A Yorkshire Boy's Cricket Scrapbook. Newnham on Severn, UK: Christopher Saunders Publishing, 2013.

IVC Host Letter

Dear Friends,

We are very happy to host the 2014 International Viola Congress in Oporto, Portugal, and we invite you to join us November 26–30, 2014. We are a very dynamic team and are sure that with your enthusiastic participation it will be a great week and a huge success. The IVC 2014 will give a special emphasis to future generations with the title "Performing for the Future of Music." The recent world financial crisis and the restrictions of the global economy make it of utmost importance to reflect on the role of the violist with thoroughness and care. With the contributions of all, the IVC 2014 wishes to share experiences and motivate and inspire the future generations of violists, while continuing to develop the art and knowledge of the viola even further.

We are hard at work building a very interesting program filled with concerts, lectures, master classes, and workshops. A gala concert by Porto Symphony Orchestra, Casa da Música and Michail Jurowski, with Nobuko Imai as soloist is already booked. We will have the opportunity to hear several other viola concertos with concerts by the regional Beiras Orchestra and superior school ESMAE Orchestra. Sunday morning will feature a promenade concert at Porto Coliseu, and in the afternoon we expect, with your help, to surpass our Guinness World Record for the largest viola ensemble. We already have guaranteed fantastic viola players, teachers, researchers, luthiers, and composers. For the younger violists we are preparing a set of master classes and workshops. Concerts and viola spots will be organized all around the city, including concert halls, theatres, art academies, cafés, clubs, and other public spaces.

Oporto is a wonderful city to visit and to enjoy. It was recently acclaimed by the Lonely Planet as the first destination to visit in 2013 and nominated as Best European Destination 2014 by the European non-profit organization European Best Destinations: "Oporto has emerged as a vibrant arts capital." In Oporto you can experience a rich musical tradition. Side by side with classical music there are good jazz clubs and traditional "tascas," where you can hear Fado, the Portuguese national music. Our new concert hall—Casa da Música, designed by Rem Koolhaas—has become internationally renowned and is one of the city's icons. A rich local cuisine is available at inexpensive restaurants and bars all over the city. Tourist activities and visits to the famous Port wine cellars are included in the program, and for the more adventurous we are providing a boat trip up the beautiful Douro River to visit the Porto wine vineyards, Unesco patrimony.

We are preparing a fine collection of hotels with special rates/discounts. There is also a nice youth hostel, and if you want to stay with a Portuguese family we are organizing a list of local viola lovers who will be very happy to welcome you into their homes.

All of this and more will be available very soon at our new website www.apvda.com. Hope to see you in Oporto in November!

APVDA – Portuguese Viola Society

In Review:
The 41st International Viola Congress, Academy of Music, Kraków, Poland, September 11–15, 2013

From left to right: Stefan Kamasa, Louise Lansdown, Max Savikangas, Carlos María Solare, and Bogusława Hubisz-Sielska perform at the opening of the 41st International Viola Congress (all photos courtesy of Dwight Pounds)

by Andrew Filmer

Prefacing the presentation of the Gold Alto Clef to David Dalton—only the second in the history of the International Viola Society—Dwight Pounds asked us to look around the room and see the connections to our fellow violists, in renewing old friendships and building new ones. In a sense, that encapsulated a theme of the 41st International Viola Congress: connections, not only in collegiality, but also in building on past developments in the viola world and in linking pedagogy, composition, research, and performance. This review aims to look at each of these aspects in turn.

I. Performances

The opening ceremony featured members of the IVS Presidency (Louise Lansdown, Carlos María Solare, and Max Savikangas) along with two Polish violists: Stefan Kamasa, one of the honorees of this year's congress, and host Bogusława Hubisz-Sielska, performing the Czech composer Anton Wranitzky's five-part *Cassatio*, arranged by Tom Tatton, which had also been featured at the 39th congress in Germany in 2011.

Concerts not only featured a nod to Polish compositions but also included a link to the Benjamin Britten centennial. Two major events were held in the gilded Florianka Concert Hall, including a performance of Britten's *Lachrymae* by Andra Darzins with the Sinfonietta Cracovia. Lech Bałaban and Nokuthula Ngwenyama also performed with the orchestra under the baton of Robert Kabara, playing concertos by Marek Stachowski and Krzysztof Penderecki, respectively. The performances by all three soloists were warmly received. Darzins also performed in recital format the day before, sharing the stage with Kim Kashkashian.

Kashkashian was undoubtedly the highlight of the congress, playing selections from György Kurtág's *Signs, Games and Messages*, a composition that was a component of the recording that earned her a Grammy Award early last year. Kashkashian was also the recipient of the IVS's annual Silver Viola Clef, given for outstanding contributions to the viola. In presenting her with the 2013 Silver Alto Clef, IVS President Carlos María Solare noted that Kashkashian was first and foremost a musician, who happened to have the viola as her "vessel of expression." This was a most apt description for a recital that showcased Kashkashian not simply as a violist, but as a performer, capturing nuances both in sound as well as in gestures. This was particularly evident in Kurtág's varied silences: some with resistance, others with freedom; ones that looked ahead, and others that looked behind—all of these included some degree of visual communication in live performance. Above all, this consummate artiste displayed what can only be called a commanding presence on stage, with every moment a meaningful part of the performance—every rest, every preparation, and of course, each sound spanning an incredible spectrum of timbres.

The appearance of Emile Cantor, whom many remembered from the 39th congress in Germany, continued the theme of "connections." Cantor was in a session shared with Jutta Puchhammer-Sédillot, and both violists and their pianists were roundly applauded. Solare performed an arrangement of another Britten work, the *Sarabande* of his *Simple Symphony*. This was an arrangement by Franz Zeyringer—the first recipient of the Gold Alto Clef—making connections not only to the composer, but to a former IVS president.

Kim Kashkashian

Two notable performances were of string duos. Seven Paganini caprices were arranged and performed by Elias Goldstein, the second-prize winner at the 2011 Primrose International Viola Competition, with Sally Chisholm on second viola. Goldstein displayed remarkable virtuosity, while Chisholm produced from her instrument some of the most beautiful, richest tone colors at the congress. While they were both clearly first-rate chamber musicians, the stark contrast in timbres seemed at times a complication—an admittedly subjective evaluation, with a possible bias from typically hearing these works on a single instrument. The second duo performance was that of violist Krzysztof Tymendorf with violinist Arnaud Kaminski, whose performance styles were seamless, with physical movements that were uncannily symmetrical. If at times the balance was slightly toward the impressively resonant viola, the congress's audience of viola enthusiasts did not seem to mind.

From left to right: violinist Arnaud Kaminski and violist Krzysztof Tymendorf

Several performances also linked the congress to the world beyond classical music, with a session on improvisation by Paweł Odorowicz, which included connections to visual art, and the Quartet Klezmer Trio led by Magdalena Brudzińska, which brought

the Polish folk soul into the concert hall. Anna Śliwa's recital displayed four works from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, each on a different instrument: the fidel, lira da braccio, viola d'amore, and Baroque viola. There were two particularly interesting aspects of the performance: First, pizzicato on the fidel while the instrument was held vertically and away from the player, and Second, the use of bass strings on the lira da braccio, which were not connected to the bridge. Accompanied skillfully by Andrzej Zawiska on harpsichord, the performance attracted considerable intellectual interest, even though it was purely a performance event instead of a research-related one.

Anna Śliwa performs on the fidel

II. Research

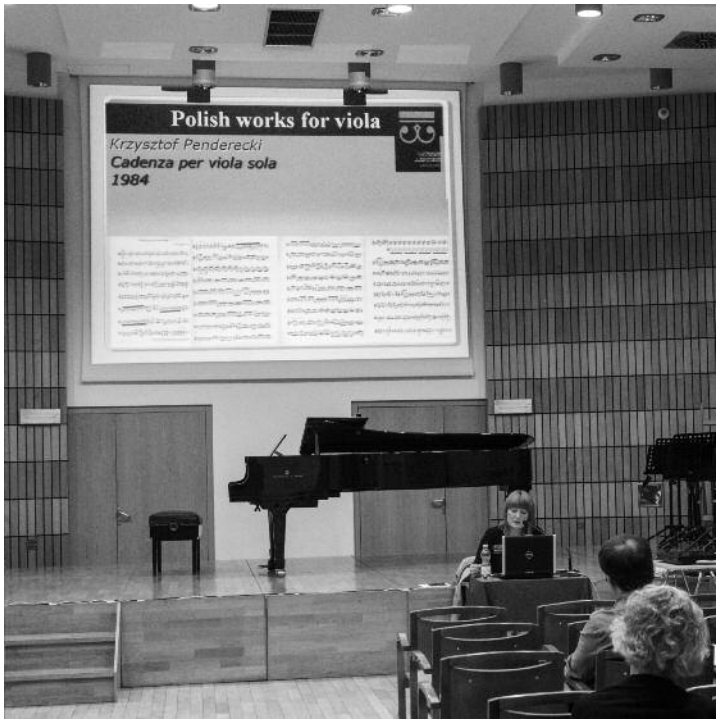
Research at the 41st congress allowed for some truly international connections. Claudine Bigelow and Donald Maurice launched *Voices from the Past: Béla Bartók's 44 Duos*, with a presentation that unpacked their recent CD recording project into three parts: live performances of selections, a display of lyrics on the overhead screen, and playback of the composer's field recordings. A truly international endeavor, the lecture segment illustrated the various connections: Primrose and Bartók, the Hungarian and Slovakian sources, and the role of congresses in the meeting of the American and New Zealand violists, leading to their eventual collaboration. The presentation included rare pictures of peasants taken by Bartók himself.

From left to right: Claudine Bigelow and Donald Maurice at the conclusion of their Bartók duos session

Orquidea Guandique presented a lecture on the Viola Concerto of Costa Rican composer Benjamin Gutiérrez and performed segments of the work. She indicated how the composition of a work could have various indispensable external connections, specifically in this instance the development of the orchestra scene in Costa Rica, which in turn was linked to governmental economic policies.

In addition to these international presentations, there was research from the host country, with the opening lecture by Dorota Stanisławska providing a useful survey of Polish works for viola. She noted

that Poland had to wait till the Romantic era for its first dedicated viola work: Henryk Wieniawski's *Reverie* in 1858–59. The World War II era had an impact on cultural life as a whole, and from 1956 onward, modern styles were incorporated into compositions, with Stanisławska noting the "exposition of characteristic viola timbres" at this point in history. It was particularly interesting during the lecture to realize the number of major works that were written for or premiered by Stefan Kamasa.



Dorata Stanisławska surveys Polish viola music

Błażej Maliszewski displayed a wide array of skills, from performing seven of his arrangements of works by Grażyna Bacewicz entirely from memory—no small feat—to a lecture on his years-long work in translating S. P. Poniatowski's book *Viola: Art and Heritage* from Russian to Polish. One senior delegate noted that this might open a pathway for sources that up to now have been exclusively available in Russia.

Two American violists bridged research with pedagogy in their lectures. Matthew Daline brought us into the twenty-first century with an exploration of technological developments, including "timeline" databases (for historical information), cloud technology (for scores), new recording options, iPads (used as a music stand with Bluetooth foot pedals), and a "virtual accompanist"—with the potential to follow a student, providing the full harmonic context from early lessons. Danny Keasler, currently at Mahidol University, brought greetings from Thailand, where he has recently formed the Thai Viola Society. He illustrated the benefits of Alfred Uhl's études in having as much melodic value for students as purely technical facility. Dwight Pounds chimed in, labeling Uhl as "one of us," thanks to his pivotal historical role in the Internationale-Viola-Forschungsgesellschaft ("The Viola Research Society"), which preceded the IVS.

III. Pedagogy

Dr. Pounds found himself in the unexpected position of facilitating a session on William Primrose that had been scheduled for David Dalton, due to an unfortunate accident that left the eminent scholar unable to travel from Geneva. A video of Dalton interviewing Primrose generated a discussion on whether Primrose's comment that violinists should not impede on the territory of violists remains valid today. Pounds noted certain observations from his own lessons with the legendary performer and ended the session with a demonstration of Primrose's "silent finger exercises."

There were several notable master classes, all by violists who presented recitals elsewhere in the congress. Pierre-Henri Xuereb combined these into a single session. Working with student Oskar Foremuy during the master class portion, Xuereb reflected that his approach has a focus on the importance of finding the optimal place for the position of the left thumb. Jerzy Kosmala's master class provided a particularly in-depth approach, often dealing with the tone quality of a single note, emphasizing that overflexibility in the wrist at the expense of the natural movement of the arm can have a negative impact. Andra Darzins allocated time toward addressing how one's overall performance style can better connect the performer to the audience. She had particularly interesting technical advice in playing on the right

foot (with the left almost suspended from the floor) in order to create better balance between the left and right arms. Both Kosmala and Darzins used the simple act of walking to demonstrate aspects of technique, with the latter demonstrating that the "figure of eight" transition of up and down bows is as much lateral as it is vertical.

Pierre-Henri Xuereb (center) with master class participants Oskar Foremuy and Anna Krzyżak

IV. Composition

During her recital, Kim Kashkashian made observations about the connection between a composer and a performer, bringing us to the final thread of "connections" that ran through the congress. There was a transcription of Chopin's Cello Sonata, op. 65, performed by Leszek Brodowski with Krzysztof Stanienda, thus including the composer that continues to be considered one of Poland's greatest musical treasures. Max Savikangas included one of his compositions, which used extended techniques that explored the furthest reaches of the instrument's capabilities, including extreme bow pressure, circular bowing, and even a surprising moment of falsetto singing from the performer. There were several premieres, including viola duos by Henryk Górecki and Jerzy Kornowicz. The premiere of Boris Pigovat's Viola Sonata, concurrent with the launch of the work's recording, provided another connection to the 39th congress, as the work was written for and performed by Donald Maurice as a form of thanks from the composer for taking on *Requiem "The Holocaust"* two years prior. The work had what seems to be Pigovat's signature sense of expanse, with both Maurice and pianist Wioletta Fluda demonstrating the widest range of textures, from moments of tranquillity to arresting rhythmic unisons. Emile Cantor's transcriptions of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* were particularly appealing. These were the result of study of the composer's own piano arrangement of selections alongside the original orchestral score—and, for one movement, the arrangement of Vadim Borisovsky.

Emile Cantor

There was perhaps no clearer indication of the value of violists collaborating in some way or form with composers than Kashkashian's efforts with Kurtág. She began by narrating the connection of performer and composer; her initial meeting with Kurtág was expected to be brief, and four hours later they had only covered the first two lines. This attention to detail was clear in her performance of the work, with an unparalleled range of timbral colors. This brings us full circle to performance—an excellent fit for the yearly event that celebrates not only the viola and violists, but the many connections that draw them all together.

Concluding Comments

Similar to reflections on the 2010 Cincinnati congress, there were certain scheduling issues, with performance segments running up to forty-five minutes

Author Andrew Filmer consults with Donald Maurice

overtime. But, as a whole, the event was particularly laudable considering that the Polish Viola Society was established only four years ago. Much credit is due to the host, Bogusława Hubisz-Sielska, with a special mention to PVS Secretary Błażej Michna, who was connected to just about every aspect of the organization of the congress: from an impromptu translation of Polish to English in a lecture segment to performing jazz at the banquet. His amiable nature no doubt added a new personal connection for many who attended the 41st International Viola Congress in Kraków.

Andrew Filmer presented research on Bach's Cello Suite No. 5 at the 41st congress, a three-year project leading to the launch of the Comus edition co-edited with Donald Maurice. He began his career as a musicologist after winning the David Dalton Viola Research Competition sponsored by this journal, another reminder of the value of sustained connections. Andrew would like to express thanks to Dwight Pounds and Carlos María Solare for their assistance toward this review.

Jerzy Kosmala: A Homecoming

Jerzy Kosmala performing at the 41st International Viola Congress

by Dwight Pounds

I have known the Polish violist Jerzy Kosmala since we were graduate students at Indiana University in the 1960s, and it has been my honor to be present at dozens of his performances over many years at American and European viola congresses. We noted rather wryly at the 1988 viola congress in Kassel, Germany, that Poland was less than a single day's drive from our location and about as accessible as the moon. It was impossible for either of us to foresee that in September 2013—twenty-five years later—he would be a featured artist at an international viola congress in Kraków, Poland. The published program for IVC XLI correctly documents this fact, but this is too easy, too short, and woefully inadequate with regard to the greater story. Even being acknowledged and honored as a Polish "master" of the viola during the course of the congress, and again correctly so, does not do justice to the truth. That he played a most credible recital to highly deserved accolades at eighty-one and past his prime is far less important ultimately than the reality of his presence: he had persevered as a man of conscience and as an artist to perform at an international viola congress in the city of his birth following decades of exile during communist rule and claim his rightful place among great Polish musicians. Had Dr. Kosmala done nothing more than walk on stage and take a bow without playing a single note, he would have been more than deserving of a prolonged standing ovation. Nevertheless, the audience

attended the recital to hear him play, as did I, but my primary motivation was more than that—I simply had to be present when, against terrible odds dictated by politics and age, he actually appeared at a Polish viola congress that no one dreamed would ever take place. There he stood, viola and bow in hand, fulfilling what had to be a personal destiny. By any measure it was a defining moment—for Jerzy Kosmala, Polish music, the viola, and human endurance.

Dwight Pounds and Jerzy Kosmala

Casting Some *Dark Shadows*:
The Viola Music of Robert Cobert

From left to right: composer Robert Cobert and violist John Peskey

by John Peskey

Like many kids growing up in the sixties, I ran home from school to watch a supernatural soap opera called *Dark Shadows. Dark Shadows* was not your usual daytime melodrama. It was filled with vampires, ghosts, witches, werewolves, and even a Frankenstein-type monster. One afternoon a ghost appeared accompanied by a haunting melody for violin and piano. That melody, "Quentin's Theme," became a big hit when the soundtrack was released in 1969. After saving every penny, I bought the recording for less than $4.50. I learned from the LP's jacket that the composer, Robert Cobert, was a Juilliard graduate. While staring frequently at the grainy little black-and-white photo of him, I dreamed of meeting him some day.

I was so smitten with the sound of the violin that I begged my parents to get me one, and I soon started taking lessons. Many years later—in 1991—as principal violist of the South Dakota Symphony and violist in the Dakota String Quartet, I was slated to play a concerto with the orchestra the next year. I decided to pursue commissioning a new work from Robert Cobert, my childhood idol. I was involved in *Dark Shadows* fandom at the time when I contacted *Shadowgram*, the official newsletter of the show. They forwarded my letter to Mr. Cobert, and much to my amazement I received a very enthusiastic call-back from him regarding my proposal! In the meantime, he sent me a string quartet that he had written a few years earlier, and my quartet gave the world premiere. The following summer, I received a draft of the score for *Concert Piece for Viola and Small Orchestra*, which I premiered on December 5, 1992.

While readers may not be familiar with the name Robert Cobert, he has had a very long and successful musical career. Born in 1924, his early jobs included playing saxophone and clarinet in New York hotels and night clubs, and he was educated at City College of New York and Juilliard. While in his twenties, he began composing for radio and theater, eventually expanding into television music. During the 1950s and 1960s he composed original music for some of the most popular game shows including *To Tell the Truth, Password*, and *The Price is Right*, and his music was heard on other shows including *Ben Casey* and *The Defenders*. In 1966 Cobert met Dan Curtis, who had created a new television show called *Dark Shadows*. The distinctive music that Cobert composed for the show was "one of the many elements which made *Dark Shadows* so memorable."[1] Cobert and Curtis would collaborate on numerous productions together, mostly in the horror genre.

But it was in a non-horror genre where Cobert would earn his most memorable film credit in a production for Dan Curtis. In 1983 the eighteen-hour television miniseries *Winds of War* premiered, for which Cobert had spent a year writing a two-thousand-page score. Reflecting on that experience, Cobert commented that "I don't mean to suggest that the quality is in any way comparable, but

writing the music for a miniseries is like writing *The Ring*."[2] Cobert was selected to compose the music for the twenty-hour sequel, *War and Remembrance*, for which he received an Emmy Award nomination. Combined, the music for the two miniseries is considered the longest score ever written for a movie. While Cobert has composed in various genres, his many television credits remain his most well-known works.

My dream of meeting Robert Cobert came true twenty-four years after I bought my *Dark Shadows* soundtrack LP. In May of 1993 Cobert and his wife were driving back to California from New York and stopped in South Dakota for a visit. Knowing that the cellist of the Dakota String Quartet and I were married, Cobert suggested writing a piece for us, but he soon informed me that he had lost the "muse" for this composition. I subsequently relocated to Boston to pursue my Master of Music degree in viola performance at the New England Conservatory of Music, where I performed his *Concert Piece for Viola* on my Master's recital. After graduating and doing some freelancing in New York, my wife and I divorced and I moved back to South Dakota. In January of 2001 the manuscript for *Contrasts*, for viola and cello, appeared at my doorstep. Unfortunately I was now without a cellist, and the piece was shelved. During this time I discussed with Cobert that I was forming a viola duo, and on April 2, 2001, I received his *Three Moods for Two Violas*. Again, because of a job relocation to Atlanta, Georgia, this piece remained unperformed. Both Cobert and I were extremely frustrated by these events! Then, in late 2003, I received a big sheet of manuscript paper with a composition written on it called *Music for Only One Lonely Viola*, bearing the inscription: "Merry Christmas, John!" I gave the premiere of this a few months later in Atlanta.

Having greatly enjoyed Cobert's works for viola, I hoped to bring his music to a wider audience through recordings and publication of the music. My first thought on having these works recorded was to find the very best viola duo possible. I found that and more in the capable hands of the Slapin-Solomon Duo. Scott Slapin and Tanya Solomon (with David Rosen in *Contrasts*) have done a fantastic job musically and technically in recording these works; they are without question very challenging. During the recording process a few changes needed to be made, which were sanctioned by the composer. And the AVS has also released the sheet music for two of the compositions, *Music for Only One Lonely Viola* and *Three Moods for Two Violas*, which can be found on their website as part of the American Viola Project.

At the age of seven, because of one soundtrack, my remarkable fortune was set in motion to the discovery and learnings of the violin and, later, viola. The composer of that soundtrack—"Uncle Bob," as he would have me call him—and I have become great friends since that initial LP purchase. I've visited and stayed at his home while enjoying many wonderful stories of his music, and I am extremely humbled that I could be a part of bringing these wonderful and fantastic pieces into the world. (And, yes, I still have my original *Dark Shadows* LP—some forty-five years later, but now personally signed by Bob.)

I share this experience to encourage violists to approach composers to write for our instrument, not only solo works but chamber works prominently featuring the viola. Then, share your story!

Recordings of Music for Only One Lonely Viola*,* Three Moods for Two Violas*, and* Contrasts *featuring Scott Slapin and Tanya Solomon (violas) and David Rosen (cello) can be found at http://americanviolasociety.org/resources/recordings/. Sheet music for* Music for Only One Lonely Viola *and* Three Moods for Two Violas *can be found at http://americanviolasociety.org/resources/scores/american-viola-project/.*

John Peskey studied with Emanuel Vardi and James Dunham and graduated with a Master of Music degree in viola performance from the New England Conservatory of Music in 1997 with honors. He continues his successful career of freelance performing and teaching in Helena, Montana.

Notes

[1] Jeffrey Dillard Thompson, "Dark Dreamer: Dan Curtis and Television Horror, 1966–2006" (PhD diss., Middle Tennessee State University, 2007), 20.

[2] Stephen Farber, "Special Challenges for TV Composers," *New York Times*, June 4, 1984.

L'Altiste Oublié:

A Short History of Théophile Laforge and the Establishment and Influence of the Viola Studio at the Conservatoire de Paris

Conservatoire de Paris, 1911(unless otherwise indicated, all images courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France)

by Nora Hamme

Credit for the rise of the modern viola is often given to Lionel Tertis and William Primrose. However, before these famous violists came along, many other notable European musicians, including Hermann Ritter, Oskar Nedbal, and Théophile Laforge, had begun a wave of interest in the viola, specializing in and promoting it as a solo instrument.[1] Laforge played a prominent role in the founding of the viola studio at the Conservatoire de Paris and encouraged the creation of compositions for the instrument. Despite this significance, relatively little has been written about Laforge or the influence of the French school on the rising prominence of the viola.

The Conservatoire de Paris was originally established as two separate institutions. The École royale de

chant was founded in 1784 during the monarchy of King Louis XVI and focused on training singers and actors. Eight years later, a second music school, the Institut national de musique, was founded for the training of instrumental musicians. In 1795 the two institutions were combined to form the Conservatoire de musique, with the first students of the new conservatory beginning their studies in the fall of 1796. By 1800 the conservatory staffed some of the best known composers and musicians in Europe, including François-Joseph Gossec, Luigi Cherubini, Jean-François Le Sueur, Rodolphe Kreutzer, and Pierre Rode.

While the Conservatoire de musique was founded in 1795, it was not until nearly a century later that a separate class was established for the viola. By that time, the idea that the viola should be taught as an independent instrument was not a new one. In 1848 Berlioz wrote that "it is unfortunate that there is no special class for viola. Despite its relationship with the violin, for the instrument to be played well, it needs its own study and constant practice. It is a sad, old and ridiculous prejudice that has so far entrusted the execution of alto parts to third violinists."[2] From the founding of the conservatory until 1885, music studios were established for the violin, violoncello, and double bass—but not for the viola. In 1870 a committee was created to reorganize the school. During that time, the idea for a viola studio was recommended by the composer François-Auguste Gevaert. The committee at first decided to have four classes of violin and viola, whereby viola would be taught along with violin in the same studio. A special prize for viola would be awarded at the end of each year to the student who showed the greatest achievement on the instrument. The committee then decided to have an independent viola class separate from the violin class.

The decision to form a separate viola studio caused a major controversy within the Parisian musical community and press. The critic Arthur Pougin wrote against it, stating:

> A member of the committee earnestly demanded the creation of a viola class. Why do this? And I repeat: why? What would a viola class be for? For those members of the committee who do not know, we must declare that the mechanism of the viola differs absolutely nothing from the mechanism of the violin, the three things that differentiate the two instruments are the following: 1. the viola is slightly larger than the violin, and the spacing requirements are slightly larger for the fingers. But the violinist who has never touched a viola would realize this fact after a few hours of practice and would play just as well as on the violin, 2. as a result of the slightly larger size of the instrument, the bow should bite the strings with more power and strength, so the full extent of the sound is given—see the same comment above, and 3. while violin music is written in the treble clef, viola music is written on the third line C key. This, we see, does not affect the mechanism of the instrument, and it is nothing to our young violinists, who are able to fluently perform transpositions. So what good is, I repeat, a viola class?[3]

Not everyone agreed with Pougin. Louis-Antoine Vidal, a music historian and critic, wrote:

> It is with sincere sorrow that we note the absence of a studio for the beautiful viola at our Paris Conservatory. Whatever the reasons for this gap, we cannot approve. The viola has a hand stamp; a special type and special studies are needed to make a violist. A good violinist can play the viola easily, but would it be good enough to draw out of the instrument the effect in which it is capable?[4]

Despite the decision by the committee, a viola studio was not established as planned in 1870, for reasons unknown.

Eight years later, an announcement was made that a viola studio had been established at the conservatoire, to be taught by Joseph-Marie Mas.[5] Mas was the violist of the famed Armingaud Quartet, founded by Edouard Lalo, which promoted the music of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, and Mendelssohn. He was also violist of the Maurin Quartet, as well as the principal violist of the Italian Theatre Orchestra. A well-known and prominent

Théophile Édouard Laforge, year unknown

violist in Paris, Mas would have been a natural choice to head the first viola studio. However, this viola class also never materialized. It was not until May 1893 that a new committee was established, finally creating a viola class. As Mas was then seventy-three and considered to be at the end of his career, it was decided that a young, up-and-coming violist would become the professor. His name was Théophile Édouard Laforge.

Born in Paris on March 6, 1863, Laforge began his violin studies at a young age and was admitted to the conservatory at the age of fourteen to study with Jules Garcin.[6] After obtaining medals in both music theory and violin, he began his advanced studies with Eugène Sauzay.[7] In 1883 he was appointed as a violinist in the Opéra de Paris. Upon graduating from the conservatory three years later, Laforge became the principal violist of the Opéra Orchestre, as well as the viola soloist with the Orchestre de la Société des concerts du Conservatoire.[8]

Laforge's teachers were not strangers to the viola, and it may have been their knowledge of the instrument that influenced Laforge to study it in the first place. His first teacher, Garcin, had composed music for viola; however, it may be his second teacher, Sauzay, who had the most influence. Sauzay had studied at the conservatory with Pierre Baillot, who is often considered the last acclaimed bastion of the French violin school. A colleague of both Pierre Rode and Rodolphe Kreutzer, Baillot had a profound effect on the technical development of violin playing in a time when virtuosity was prized above all else. He was also an advocate of chamber music and had his own string quartet. It was in this group that Sauzay played second violin, later switching to viola.

After being appointed Professor of Viola, Laforge stopped playing the violin and focused primarily on playing and teaching the viola, as well as developing ideas on viola pedagogy. Laforge believed that all students should study the violin before studying the viola, as it would help with virtuosity on the instrument. He also believed, similar to the ideas of Lionel Tertis, that the viola needed a determined size. During this period, many viola students were either playing on large Italian violas (up to 18 inches in length) or on violins restrung with viola strings. Laforge felt that a viola of 15 3/4 inches was the appropriate size. A good sound on a viola this size, according to Laforge, was very easy to obtain and would not cause injury or physical stress to the performer.

During his career at the conservatory, Laforge initiated several works for viola from composers of the time, almost all of whom were French. Several pieces were commissioned by Laforge for the *concours* at the conservatory. The *concours* is a type of final exam, and students who receive a *premiere prix* at a *concours* are considered to have graduated from the conservatory. To earn a *premiere prix*, a violist would need to demonstrate his abilities by performing a *morceau de concours*, or a work composed to show off the capabilities of both the instrument and the player.[9] Laforge commissioned many pieces between the years 1896 and 1918 for the *concours*. Many other pieces were composed during Laforge's tenure at the conservatory, including Paul Rougnon's *Grand Étude de Concert pour Alto et Piano* and *Suite de Concert pour Alto et Piano*, Léon Firket's *Romance pour Alto et Piano,* and Louis Vierne's *Deux Pièces pour Alto et Piano*, op. 5.

Table 1. Pieces of the *Concours* during Laforge's Tenure

Years Performed for *Concours*	Piece	Composer	Dedicatee
1896, 1903	*Concertstück en ré mineur pour Alto et Piano*	Léon Firket	Godefroid Henvaux
1897	*Concertino Romantique en ré mineur pour Alto et Piano*, op. 138	Paul Rougnon	Laforge
1898, 1901,	*Concertino en ut majeur pour Alto et*	Andrey (Heinrich)	H. Altani
1907, 1917	*Orchestre*, op. 7	Arends	
1899	*Concertstück (G-moll) für Bratsche mit Begleitung des Orchesters oder Pianoforte, op. 46*	Hans Sitt	None
1900, 1914	*Caprice en la mineur pour Alto et Orchestre*, op. 106b	Charles Lefebvre	Guillaume-Antoine Rémy
1902	*Fantaisie de Concert en G mineur pour Alto et Piano*	Paul Rougnon	None
1904, 1911	*Morceau de Concert pour Alto et Orchestre*, op. 23	Léon Honnoré	Laforge
1905	*Chaconne pour Alto et Piano*, op. 8	Henri Marteau	Laforge
1906	*Fantaisie pour Alto et Piano*, op. 18	Hélène Fleury	Laforge
1908, 1913	*Concertstück pour Alto et Piano*	George Enescu	Laforge
1909, 1918	*Poème pour Alto et Orchestre*, op. 74	Eugène Cools	Laforge
1910, 1915	*Appassionato pour Alto et Piano*, op. 34	Henri Büsser	Laforge
1912	*Concertstück pour Alto et Orchestre*, op. 19	René Jullien	Laforge
1916	*Allegro Appassionato en ré mineur pour Alto et Piano*	Paul Rougnon	None

The establishment of a viola class at the conservatory—as well as Laforge's presence as professor—had an eminent influence on compositions for the viola by French composers.

Laforge's Students

Laforge's studio at the conservatory would create a generation of new violists and musicians, including Pierre Monteux, Henri Casadesus, Maurice Vieux, Louis Bailly, and Paul-Louis Neuberth. Each student would go on to have his own successful career in music and bear a heavy influence on the further development of viola playing and musicianship worldwide.

Pierre Monteux originally studied violin at the conservatory; later he studied viola with Laforge and joined the Opéra-Comique Orchestre as a violist.

Pierre Monteux, 1911

Monteux grew interested in conducting, and in 1911 he became friends with Sergei Diaghilev. He rose to prominence as a conductor after leading the first performances of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* and *Petrushka*, Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*, and Debussy's *Jeux*. Monteux became one of the most prominent conductors of the twentieth century, conducting the Metropolitan Opera, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra Amsterdam, San Francisco Symphony, and the London Symphony Orchestra. Later in his career, Monteux became known as a conducting teacher, founding The Pierre Monteux School for Conductors and Orchestra Musicians in Maine. As a teacher, Monteux would help shape such distinguished conductors as André Previn, Lorin Maazel, and Seiji Ozawa.

Henri Casadesus began his musical studies with Albert Lavignac and later studied viola with Laforge. He took the *premiere prix* in viola in 1899, and in 1901 he founded La Société des instruments anciens with Camille Saint-Saëns. He was also one of the first members of the Quatuor Capet. Also a composer, Casadesus is most famous for the viola concerti he composed under the guise of other composers. The Concerto in D Major for Viola by C. P. E. Bach, the Viola Concerto in C Minor by J. C. Bach, and the Viola Concerto in B Minor by George Frideric Handel were actually written by Casadesus in the style of the purported composers.

Maurice Vieux, year unknown (image courtesy of David M. Bynog)

Maurice Vieux studied viola with Laforge at the conservatory and received the *premiere prix* medal in 1902. He later became the principal violist of the Opéra national de Paris and the Orchestre de la Société des concerts du Conservatoire. Vieux was also a member of the Quatuor Parent and Quatuor Touche. In 1918 Vieux replaced Laforge as Professor of Viola at the conservatory. He was also a composer and wrote many pieces for the viola, including several étude books and a *Scherzo*. Vieux's influence was as prominent as that of Laforge; several pieces were dedicated to Vieux, including Max Bruch's *Romanze für Bratsche und Orchester* and Paul Rougnon's *Fantaisie-Caprice en sol majeur pour Alto et Piano*. In 1983 the French viola society Les amis de l'alto established the Le Concours international d'alto Maurice Vieux, an international competition for viola players, in honor of Vieux.

The Quatuor Capet: Lucien Capet, Violin I; André Touret, Violin II; Louis Hasselmans, Violoncello; Henri Casadesus, Viola; year unknown

Louis Bailly, year unknown (photographer Kubey-Rembrandt Studios, courtesy of the Curtis Institute of Music)

Louis Bailly studied violin and viola at the conservatory. After graduating, he was a member of the Opéra-Comique Orchestre and the Concerts Colonne. In 1903 he was a member of the Quatuor Capet, and he later served as a member of the Geloso, Elman, and Flonzaley Quartets. Bailly was a prominent soloist with several American orchestras, and in 1919 he gave the premieres of Rebecca Clarke's Viola Sonata and Ernest Bloch's Suite at the Berkshire Festival (he premiered Bloch's orchestral version of the Suite the following year). From 1925 to 1941 Bailly taught violin, viola, and chamber music at the Curtis Institute of Music, and from 1943 to 1957 he taught at the Conservatoire de musique du Quebec.

Having studied under Laforge at the conservatory, **Paul-Louis Neuberth** became a performer as well as an arranger, transcribing several works for viola—including pieces by Jacques Ibert, Maurice Ravel, Isaac Albéniz, and Vincent d'Indy. He gave the second performance of York Bowen's *Phantasy in F Major*, op. 54, at Wigmore Hall in London.[10] Johannes Palaschko, the German composer, dedicated his *24 leichte melodische Viola-Studien* to Neuberth.

Conclusion

The formation of a viola studio at the Conservatoire de Paris was a key event in the founding of the French viola school. Théophile Laforge's influence instilled the need for specialization in the viola and eventually led to the establishment of a formal educational system for the viola in France. His presence also inspired the creation of numerous compositions for the viola by some of the leading French composers of the time. Even Arthur Pougin, who had earlier criticized the formation of a viola studio, wrote:

> Halévy was right to rehabilitate the viola, once despised and held as almost useless. With its melancholy and tender voice, the viola is one of the most essential elements of the orchestra, and now its importance is recognized. This year's viola competition was not only excellent, but particularly brilliant, and Mr. Laforge's class there continues with his usual high standards.[11]

Dr. Nora Hamme is currently the Lecturer of Upper Strings at Juniata College. She is also an adjunct faculty member at Hagerstown Community College, where she teachers music history. Dr. Hamme was recently awarded the DMA in viola performance from Shenandoah University-Conservatory, where she studied under Doris Lederer.

Notes

[1] David M. Bynog, "The Viola in America: Two Centuries of Progress," *Notes* 68, no. 4 (June 2012): 742.

[2] Hector Berlioz, "Un reproche adressé au Conservatoire," *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, no. 34 (August 20, 1848): 254 (all translations are by Matthew Darsey and Nora Hamme).

[3] Arthur Pougin, "Des classes de violon au Conservatoire," *Le Ménestrel*, no. 33 (July 17, 1870): 262 .

[4] Frédéric Laine, "La classe d'alto de Théophile Laforge au Conservatoire," *Bulletin 1997 de l'Association des Amis de l'Alto*, no. 23 (December 1997): 8–15.

[5] Editor, *L'Art musical*, February 14, 1878.

[6] Jules Garcin (1830–1896) studied violin with Jean-Delphin Alard at the conservatory and later became Professor of Violin in 1875. His most notable students include Théophile Laforge, Henri Marteau, and Jules Boucherit.

[7] Eugène Sauzay (1809–1901) studied violin with Pierre Baillot (a student of Giovanni Viotti) and was a violinist to both King Louis-Philippe I in 1840 and Napoleon III. He became Professor of Violin at the conservatory in 1860.

[8] Now the Orchestre de Paris.

[9] Peter Neubert, "The Development of Viola Instruction at the Paris Conservatoire during the Nineteenth Century and the Evolution of an Idiomatic Style of Writing for the Viola as Seen through the Music of the Viola *Concours*, 1896–1918" (DMA diss., University of Kentucky, 2004), 93–94.

[10] Lewis Foreman, liner notes to *York Bowen: The Complete Works for Viola and Piano*, Lawrence Power (viola) and Simon Crawford-Phillips (piano), Hyperion CDA67651/2, 2008, compact disc, 5.

[11] Arthur Pougin, "Les concours du Conservatoire: L'Alto," *Le Ménestrel*, no. 27 (July 6, 1907): 213.

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Zen in the Art of Viola Playing:

Takemitsu's *A Bird came down the Walk*

by Julie Michael

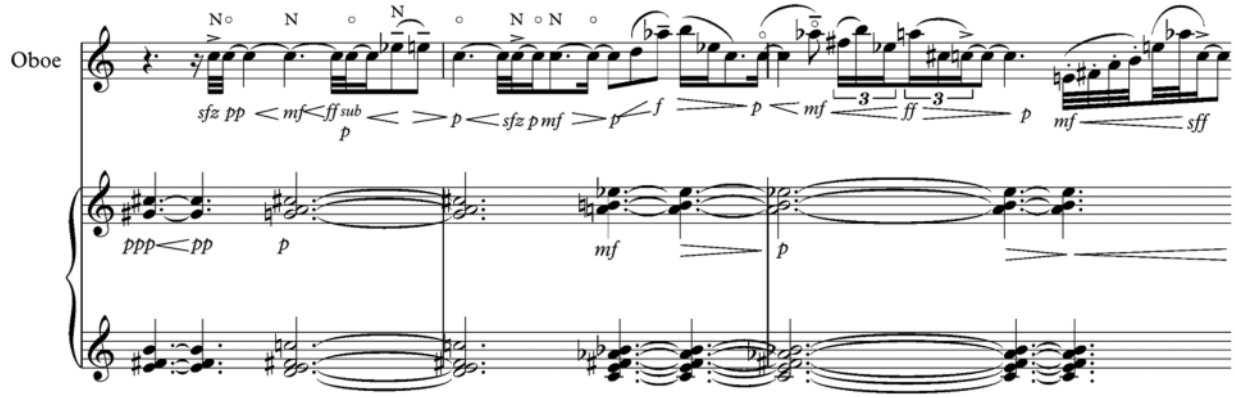
In any analysis of the work of Tōru Takemitsu, two themes invariably appear: his success in integrating Japanese and Western musical traditions in his compositions and his evocative use of color and texture. Although he was an avid writer himself, Takemitsu's essays and journal entries rarely detail his thought processes behind the composition of specific works; however, they do illuminate the two above-mentioned themes with respect to his work as a whole. His writings assist the performer in developing a unified understanding of his music—from its tonal language to its aesthetic roots in traditional Japanese art forms—and thus lead to an informed approach to specific works. In the case of his work for viola and piano, *A Bird came down the Walk*, the performer will also gain insight from consulting the Emily Dickinson poem of the same title, as discussed later in this article.

A Bird came down the Walk was written in 1995 as a gift for the violist Nobuko Imai, a longtime friend of Takemitsu. Listeners familiar with the composer's work will recognize the opening theme from his 1977 orchestral piece, *A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden*. "The bird theme," Takemitsu writes, "goes walking through the motionless scroll painting like a landscape, a garden hushed and bright with daylight."[1] As we will see, the parallel between a piece of music and a garden is a theme to which Takemitsu returns again and again in his writings. Investigations of analyses and anecdotes from the composer's own pen will plant seeds of ideas for the attentive violist to nurture into an elegant performance of *A Bird came down the Walk*.

Takemitsu's Tonal Language

A natural starting point in understanding *A Bird came down the Walk* would be to attempt to unearth Takemitsu's tonal language, a task that proves thorny and, for many performers, not particularly enlightening. The opening theme of *A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden* (ex. 1), first appearing in the oboe and reused note-for-note in *A Bird came down the Walk*, was composed by means of "magic squares"[2] that manipulate numbers to determine the intervals of the "bird" theme.

Example 1. Tōru Takemitsu, A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden*, mm. 1–3 (reduction).*



Takemitsu himself admits that "the listener need not understand the different operations"[3] employed to create the resultant melody, as if to suggest that the music's beauty lies in the mystery of its genesis. More useful for the performer's purposes is an understanding of the *general* way in which Takemitsu conceives of pitch and sound.

A striking statement in his writing mirrors Schoenberg's concept of "emancipation of the dissonance," the idea of pitches and intervals as freed from the conventional hierarchy of consonance and dissonance. Takemitsu writes:

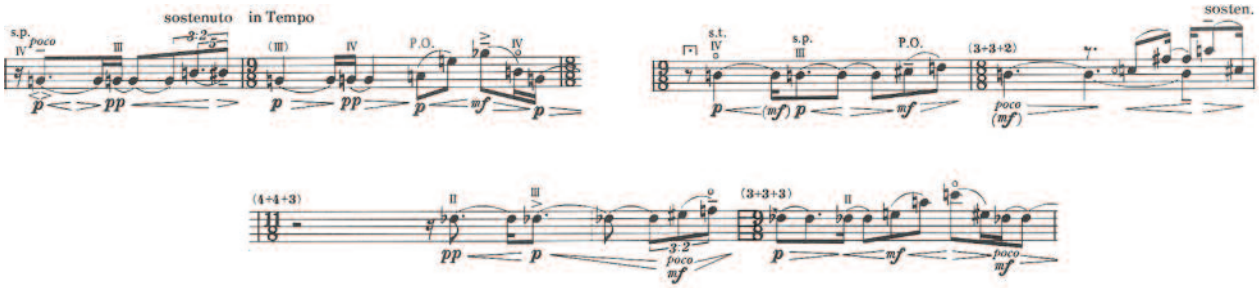
> There is a point of view holding that irregular sound (commonly called noise) is an unpleasant signal that disturbs our hearing. Sometimes dissonant sounds are referred to as irregular. But the problem here is that the dissonance of one stylistic period can be experienced as consonance in another period . . . In contrast to noise, musical sound is usually construed to be a physiologically conditioned and controlled sound signal. Would other kinds of music with delicate nuances outside this controlled system be experienced by Western ears as noise?[4]

This suggests not only emancipation of pitches from traditional notions of dissonance, but also emancipation of timbres from stereotypes of pleasantness and unpleasantness; in other words, to Takemitsu, "sound quality" as an evaluative term is a moot concept, and therefore any sound is fair game. Given the lyrical, even Romantic idiom of *A Bird came down the Walk*, one might expect the piece to follow a pre-existing structural format or at least to utilize norms of tension and release. But Takemitsu's statement precludes the possibility of tension and release: if all sounds are equal, there can be no inherent tension in an interval or a timbre from which release could be desired.

This seems to leave the performer in an expressive predicament, but Takemitsu's writings go on to supply further insights, leading to a dreamlike soundworld in which color and silence emerge as the primary tools for breathing life into a piece. Of Japanese instrumental music, which profoundly impacted Takemitsu's composition, he says that "more importance is attached to appreciating the particular tone-quality of *koto* or *shamisen* [traditional Japanese stringed instruments] rather than to the combination of instrumental sounds."[5] Indeed, this preoccupation with tone quality is evident in the composers whom Takemitsu frequently cites as most influential on his own composition: Debussy, Messiaen, and Cage, all of whom, in a musico-philosophical feedback loop, were themselves inspired by Eastern musical traditions.

A Bird came down the Walk features several distinctive motivic cells, but these are developed by timbral, rather than harmonic or rhythmic, modifications—and timbre, for Takemitsu, is a broad parameter that encompasses even pitch itself. According to Takemitsu, "Each pitch . . . has a different timbral spectrum and movement,"[6] meaning that even for listeners without absolute pitch, the transposition of a given phrase to a different pitch level will result in a distinct timbral experience. With each transposed reiteration of the opening three-note cell (ex. 2), a subtle change in sonority arises from the contrasting harmonic spectra and the differences in the resonance of the body and open strings of the viola.

Example 2. Tōru Takemitsu, A Bird came down the Walk*, mm. 10–11; mm. 19–20; and mm. 26–27, each featuring a transposition of the opening cell B-flat–B-natural–G.*



Thus Takemitsu's view of color is not as something that the composer layers on top of bare notes like a coat of varnish, but as a quality intrinsic to the notes themselves.

This is not to say that Takemitsu does not layer further colors onto the notes; as we see in the above excerpts, the viola part is teeming with markings calling for variations in bow placement and left-hand position; nuances that enrich the colors already there. (Note that "P. O." indicates a return to *ordinario*.)

The Role of Literature

Takemitsu's *A Bird came down the Walk* derives its title from a short poem by Emily Dickinson, first published in 1891. This is one of many examples of the influence of literature on Takemitsu's music: he has titled other pieces after works by Makoto Ooka, Shuzo Takiguchi, Rabindranath Tagore, and James Joyce. Due to his reluctance to write about the origins of particular pieces, it is difficult to ascertain the exact nature of the correlation he intended between a literary work and the music inspired by it:

A Bird came down the Walk—
He did not know I saw—
He bit an Angleworm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw,

And then he drank a Dew
From a convenient Grass—
And then hopped sidewise to the Wall
To let a Beetle pass—

He glanced with rapid eyes
That hurried all around—
They looked like frightened Beads, I thought—
He stirred his Velvet Head

Like one in danger, Cautious,
I offered him a Crumb
And he unrolled his feathers
And rowed him softer home—

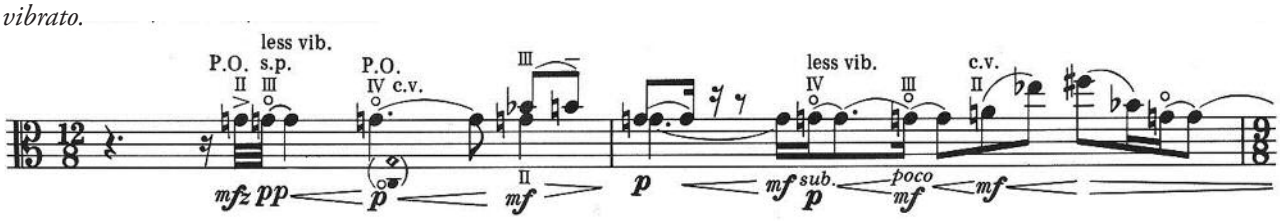
Than Oars divide the Ocean,
Too silver for a seam—
Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon
Leap, plashless as they swim.

In this case, however, we find an unmistakable affinity between the attitude of the poem's narrator and the attitude espoused by Takemitsu in his writings on music and aesthetics, captured succinctly by Takemitsu's friend John Cage: "We are getting nowhere and that is a pleasure."[7]

As in the piece for viola and piano, the poem contains no dramatic narrative, no development; it merely observes—without expectation or judgment—the natural unfolding of a mundane event: a bird enjoying a meal and taking flight. At the end, the poem adorns its matter-of-fact observations with similes, comparing the bird's wings alternately to oars that carry him on his way and to the graceful movements of butterflies. Dickinson looks at the event from a variety of angles, each one of them beautiful—just as Takemitsu calls for the same pitch to be played on different strings, at turns with and without vibrato, *sul ponticello* or *sul tasto*, sometimes as a harmonic, occasionally with other notes layered above or below it (ex. 3).

This kaleidoscopic treatment also reflects the theme's musical ancestry; in *A Flock Descends*, the oboe likewise explores the varied timbres available from a single pitch through the alternating use of natural and harmonic fingerings, as shown in example 1.

Example 3. The opening measures of A Bird came down the Walk *call for precise bow placement and attention to vibrato.*



The Role of Other Art Forms

Takemitsu's interest in literature goes hand in hand with his lifelong collaboration with various other art forms. In his twenties, he co-founded Jikken Kōbō ("experimental workshop"), a multidisciplinary group comprising visual artists, choreographers, poets, and musicians who sought to challenge the academic art scenes of the 1950s. Later, Takemitsu would compose music for several films of Akira Kurosawa, including the 1985 epic *Ran*. Particularly following his encounters with John Cage, Takemitsu drew influence from the distinctive characteristics shared by many types of Japanese art.

Takemitsu's conception of color as a fundamental component of the raw material is mirrored in the elegant simplicity of East Asian ink-wash painting (fig. 1), the goal of which is not simply to imitate the subject but to capture its invisible soul. In his research on Takemitsu's role of texture, Dana Wilson indicates that "a minimum of strokes projects the essence of the configuration, and color is suggested through subtle variations in the texture and density of the black ink . . . Takemitsu says: 'I love Japanese calligraphy. Black and white—no colors. So we feel many colors. I use a string ensemble of the same color but I make different colors.'"[8]

Takemitsu gives a stunning firsthand account of another type of experience that may have inspired this statement, describing his viewing of the performance of a traditional shadow play on a trip to Bali with a French study group in 1973. Curiously, no lighting was used to project the shadows onto the screen behind the performer. Takemitsu asked his interpreter for an explanation as to why the man was performing in darkness:

> By way of [the interpreter], the puppeteer responded that he was conversing with the universe through the light of the stars for himself and also for many other souls. He appeared to have said, as well, that something was returned to this world from the universe during the performance. Perhaps this performance, too, could have been thought of as foolishness. But, at the time, I felt that something was coming from beyond my consciousness. I kept looking at a small screen on which nothing appeared. Soon I thought I found something there.[10]

The influence of Japanese art on Takemitsu's aesthetic extends beyond his special attention to color. His reference to a scroll painting mentioned earlier brings us to his concept of form. The *emaki*, or *emaki-mono*, is a narrative painting on a long horizontal piece of paper or silk dating back to the eleventh century. An *emaki*, such as the Heian-period masterpiece in figure 2, is read by unrolling the scroll from right to left, a little bit at a time, so that the story unfolds gradually. Much like a walk through a garden, the reader can take in the images at his or her own pace.

With respect to large-scale structure, Takemitsu generally does not acknowledge adhering to established forms such as the sonata form or even the very concept of "form" as it is typically understood. Instead, he was strongly inspired by traditional Japanese gardens, such as that of Kyoto's Saihō-ji Temple pictured in figure 3: "I love gardens. They do not reject people. There one can walk freely, pause to view the entire garden, or gaze at a single tree. Plants, rocks, and sand show changes, constant changes."[12]

Fig. 1. Edo-period calligraphy by Honami Koetsu shows another take on birds coming down the walk.[9]

Fig. 2. Animals frolic in this scene from a handscroll attributed to Toba Sojo.[11]

His writings are full of pencil drawings of gardens that illustrate the structures of his pieces. Indeed, he says, "Sometimes my music follows the design of a particular existing garden. At times it may follow the design of an imaginary garden I have sketched. Time in my music may be said to be the duration of my walk through these gardens."[15] Takemitsu often draws an analogy between a soloist and a traveler strolling through a garden, while the accompanying instrument or instruments are likened to sand and clay. Thus in *A Bird came down the Walk*, he refers to the viola's "bird theme" strolling through the "garden" surrounding it.

Takemitsu was also deeply influenced by the traditional Japanese court music known as *gagaku*, "A music that challenges measurable time . . . *Gagaku* lacks the concept of beat in Western terms. Of course, a certain rhythm is present, woven by specific percussion instruments . . . However, they serve only to embroider the gossamer curtain of intricate sound."[16] His own music, including *A Bird came down the Walk*, is clearly modeled after this "stream of sounds,"[17] rather than on the meticulously delineated formal sections of Western classical music:

> In my music there is no constant development as in the sonata; instead, imaginary soundscapes appear. A single element is never emphasized with development through contrast . . . My music is composed as if fragments were thrown together unstructured, as in dreams. You go to a far place and suddenly find yourself back home without having noticed the return.[18]

A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden was in fact inspired by a dream that Takemitsu had after meeting the artist Marcel Duchamp.

In *gagaku*, the central instrument is a mouth organ known as the *shō* (fig. 4). Consisting of seventeen bamboo pipes, its sound is activated both "by inhaling and exhaling. The resultant sound, continuous and without attack, does not generate external beats, but awakens an internal latent rhythm. Delicately swaying clusters of sound reject the concept of everyday time."[19] The most common of these "clusters of sound" are shown in example 4.

Fig. 3.[13] *Saihō-ji Temple Moss Garden. "It is the garden that gives the ideas form."* [14]

Fig. 4.[20] *"The stream of sounds from a* shō *has an eternal repose about it."* [21]

The performer will benefit from listening to recordings of *gagaku*, whose rich, reedy sonic background is mirrored in the thick chords sustained in the piano part of *A Bird came down the Walk* (ex. 5). In fact, several of these chords are near or exact transpositions of the clusters that are shown in example 4.

Takemitsu's description of the *shō* is consistent with his preference for the non-linear feeling of dream-time, which does not confine events to the ordinary waking rubric in which they progress as logical consequences of one another. It also rules out the possibility of anything resembling a narrative arc, which depends both on the regularity of everyday time and on some degree of tension and release. Any pre-existing form would, by its very nature, tend to impose both of these elements and would thus be incompatible with the aesthetic principles that lend Takemitsu's music its ineffable uniqueness.

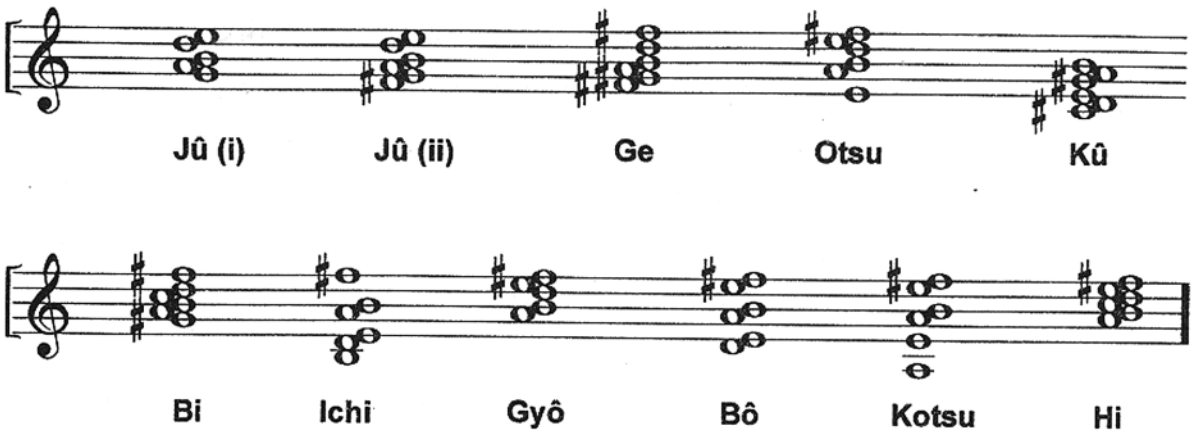
Space and Silence

Many Japanese art forms exemplify the rejection of everyday time to which the composer refers. According to Timothy Koozin, "In traditional Japanese poetry and visual arts, the most humble of subjects may be united with metaphors of timeless eternity."[23] For example, the above-mentioned ink-wash paintings tended to leave large stretches of empty space (fig. 5), "Like a window into an endlessly extended visual world."[24]

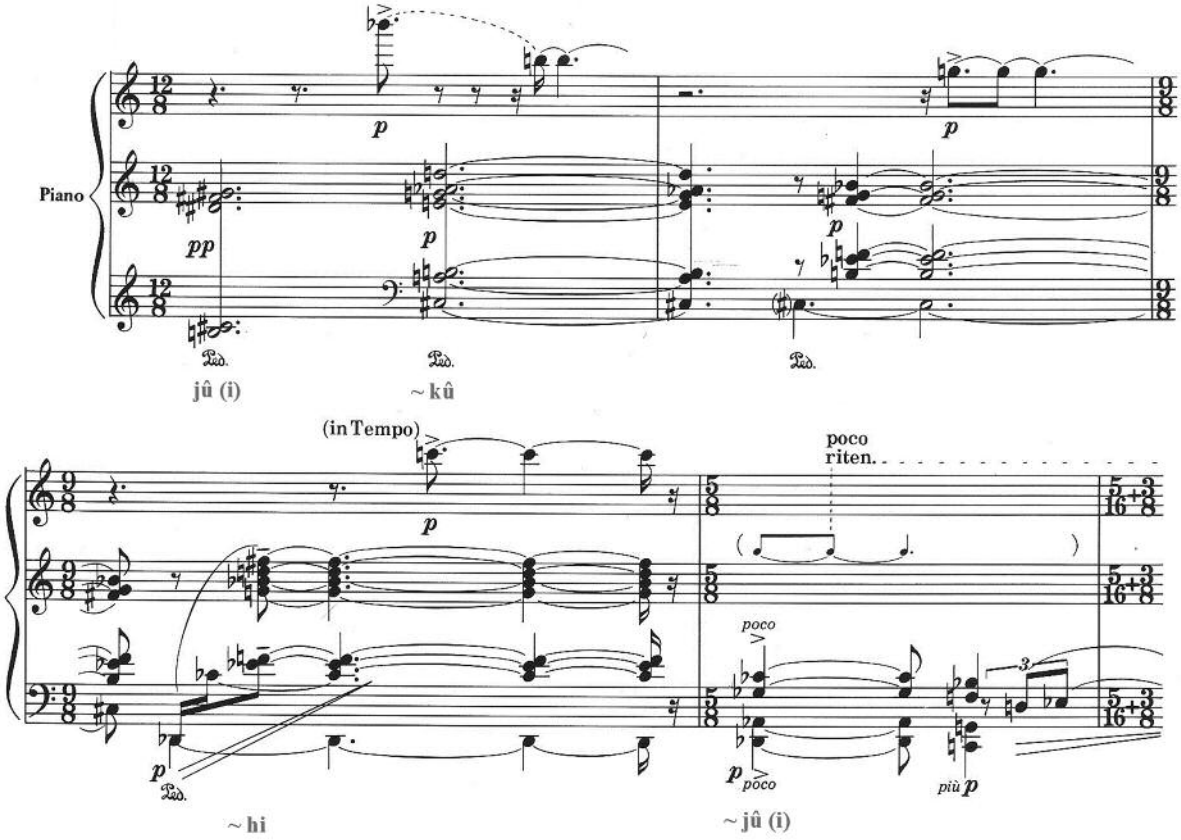
Likewise, Takemitsu says that the "most important thing in Japanese music is space, not sound. Strong tensions . . . always I have used few notes, many silences, from my first piece."[26] One can think of silence—the infinite—as the fundamental background underlying Takemitsu's music, framed by concretely bounded sonic events that thereby unite the infinite with the finite.

The boundary between these apparent opposites is encompassed by the Japanese term *ma*, sometimes translated as "in between." This is the same term a dancer or a judo artist would use to refer to a pause taken between gestures, but Takemitsu's use of the term involves a more elusive meaning that he says can only be understood through experience: "The unique idea of *ma*—the unsounded part of this experience—has at the same time a deep, powerful, and rich resonance that can stand up to the sound. In short, this *ma,* this powerful silence, is that which gives life to the sound and removes it from its position of primacy."[27] Koozin claims that Takemitsu's piano writing frequently includes gestures with a clearly articulated initiation that are then allowed to fade away to nothing, so that "the listener is less likely to hear the ensuing silences as partitions between events."[28] This tendency occurs as well in *A Bird came down the Walk*, in which both the viola and the piano

Example 4. The most common chords of the shō.[22]



Example 5. Opening piano chords of A Bird came down the Walk*, featuring* shō*-like clusters in the lower staves and the iconic three-note cell B-flat–B-natural–G in the upper staff.*

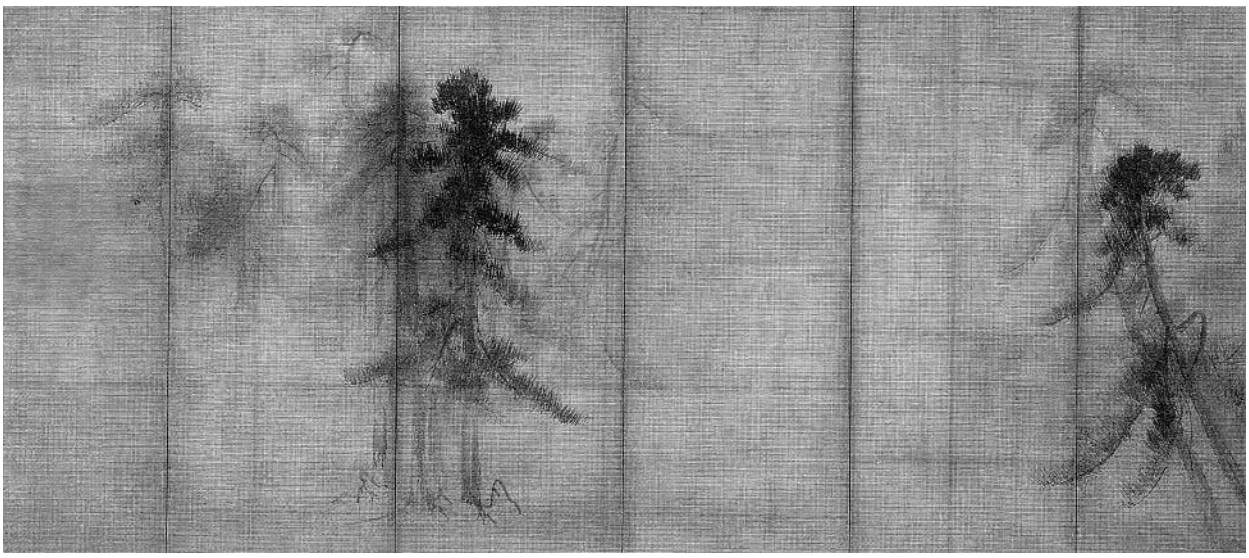


often fade smoothly into a silence that can be interpreted as a continuation of the same gesture, rather than as an empty interval between gestures (ex. 6).

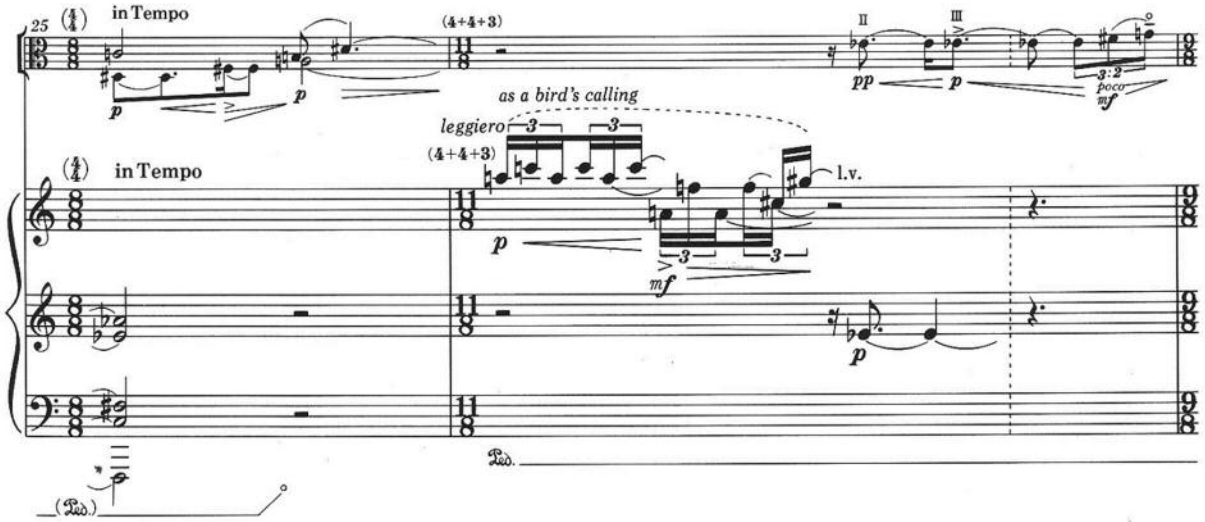
Putting the Pieces Together: The Role of the Performer

All this information becomes relevant to the performer by serving first of all as a reminder not to overthink the music, but rather to let the sounds speak for themselves—a deceptively simple goal that can prove treacherous in practice, particularly for those performers accustomed to approaching music through analysis and research. Despite Takemitsu's own prolific writings, he maintains that "program notes place emphasis on reading and may interfere with the actual hearing of music. Too much explanation may even change the direction of the music and

Fig. 5. Painted screen by Hasegawa Tohaku, a pioneer in the sumi-e *style in the sixteenth century.*[25]



Example 6. Tōru Takemitsu, A Bird came down the Walk*, mm. 25–26; both the viola and the piano parts feature slurs from a note to a rest, treating silence as sound.*



occasionally even inhibit the evocative powers of music."[29] This reticence appears not to be an attempt to shroud his work in secrecy, but rather to encourage performers and audience members alike to listen with receptive ears. He advises performers that the pauses in his music—the moments of *ma*—are intended for the performer "not to produce sound but to listen to it, to strive constantly to discover sound in silence," as he himself once discovered colors in a dark shadow play; "Listening is as real as making sound; the two are inseparable."[30] These sentiments are beautifully captured in his comparisons of experiencing music to strolling through a Japanese garden, without a destination, unhurriedly taking in the harmony of the details. Indeed, when the visitor to a lovely garden pauses to admire a plant or a pond, he does not conceive of this moment as a lapse in between the more substantial periods of walking; rather, his pauses are events in themselves, deeper reflections upon what he has glimpsed while walking.

Takemitsu would argue for the role of the performer as a gardener, responsible for inviting and fully immersing the audience in the music. He relates an account of the *ketchak* that he witnessed in Bali, in which "a crowd of several dozen people shouted like monkeys, adding certain gestures, occasionally singing as a unison chorus."[31] In this traditional performance, he says:

> When a villain appears . . . the audiences behaved just as we used to when Ken Takakura [a Japanese movie actor] . . . was attacked from behind by a swordsman and the audiences at movie theatres far from metropolitan centers would shout, 'Look out from behind, Ken!' The audience, including children . . . are stage-hands yet they are observers at the same time. They are performers and spectators.[32]

Thus the performer should direct his or her energy not toward demarcating formal sections of the work, aligning his or her gestures perfectly with the unyielding pulse of the music, or searching for a narrative arc to follow, as these elements are either non-existent or well hidden in Takemitsu's music; rather, the performer's goal should be to bring out the myriad colors at his or her disposal for the audience's discovery, always seeking to draw further nuance from the sounds.

Clearly this double role of the audience extends to the performer as well, so that in addition to preparing and maintaining the "garden" of sounds for the audience's enjoyment, the performer also takes time to explore the garden him- or herself. Takemitsu reminds musicians to "first concentrate on the simple act of listening. Only then can you comprehend the aspirations of the sounds themselves."[33] John Cage once again echoes Takemitsu's sentiment: "I love sounds, just as they are, and I have no need for them to be anything more than what they are."[34]

But further support for the performer-as-audience mentality in the case of *A Bird came down the Walk* comes from the poem by Emily Dickinson. The poem's narrator does not simply describe the events she witnesses but actively engages in them. By "offer[ing] him a Crumb," the narrator becomes not only an audience member but a performer in the events of the poem; and by reflecting on the events she has described, she becomes not only a performer but an audience member. So the distinction between performer and spectator, like that between sound and silence or between finite and infinite, ultimately seems to disappear.

To this end, the performer can take advantage of Takemitsu's penchant for silences: built-in moments for garden-strolling, for listening from the perspective of an audience member—or in this case, of a bird-watcher. Essentially, a successful performance of *A Bird came down the Walk*, or any other work of Takemitsu, depends on an acute mindfulness to the subtleties of timbre as well as a dissolving of Western music's traditional barrier between audience and performer. Takemitsu's writings become a poetic and enlightening read for a flexible musician willing to expand his or her sensitivity to color and to embrace a new mindset with respect to the performer's role.

Julie Michael is pursuing a Master's degree in viola performance at McGill University, where she studies with André Roy. She teaches at the McGill Conservatory and holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan.

Notes

[1] Tōru Takemitsu, liner notes to *A Bird came down the Walk: Original Works for Viola and Piano*, by Nobuko Imai (viola) and Roland Pöntinen (piano), BIS-CD-829, 1996, compact disc.

[2] Tōru Takemitsu, *Confronting Silence: Selected Writings* (Lanham, MD: Fallen Leaf Press, 1995), 103.

[3] Ibid., 106.

[4] Ibid., 84.

[5] Ibid., 9.

[6] Ibid., 110.

[7] John Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings by John Cage* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 119.

[8] Dana Richard Wilson, "The Role of Texture in Selected Works of Toru Takemitsu" (PhD dissertation, University of Rochester, 1982), 22.

[9] Kyoto National Museum.

[10] Tōru Takemitsu, "Mirrors," trans. Sumi Adachi and Roger Reynolds, *Perspectives of New Music* 30, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 39–40.

[11] Kyoto National Museum.

[12] Takemitsu, *Confronting Silence: Selected Writings*, 95.

[13] Wikimedia Commons, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saih%C3%B4-ji_Temple_-_Garden2.jpg#filelinks.

[14] Takemitsu, *Confronting Silence: Selected Writings*, 119.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 6.

[17] Ibid., 7.

[18] Ibid., 106.

[19] Ibid., 7.

[20] Japanese Shō (Mouth Organ), Early Tokugawa period (19th century). Bamboo, wood, metal. Dimensions: L. longest pipe 45.4 cm (17–7/8 in.); L. shortest pipe 18.1 cm (7–1/8 in.). Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Rogers Fund, 1968.

[21] Takemitsu, *Confronting Silence: Selected Writings*, 7.

[22] Peter Burt, *The Music of Tōru Takemitsu* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 165.

[23] Timothy Koozin, "Toru Takemitsu and the Unity of Opposites," *College Music Symposium* 30, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 40, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40373998.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Tokyo National Museum.

[26] Wilson, "Role of Texture," 20.

[27] Takemitsu, *Confronting Silence: Selected Writings*, 51.

[28] Koozin, "Unity of Opposites," 36.

[29] Takemitsu, *Confronting Silence: Selected Writings*, 97.

[30] Ibid., 84.

[31] Takemitsu, "Mirrors," 53.

[32] Ibid., 54.

[33] Takemitsu, *Confronting Silence: Selected Writings*, 88.

[34] Miroslav Sebestik, *Listen* (Chicago: Facets Multi-Media, 2004), DVD.

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———. "Mirrors." Translated by Sumi Adachi and Roger Reynolds. *Perspectives of New Music* 30, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 36–80.

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The Eclectic Violist

Walking in Mozart's Shoes: Master the Art of the Improvised Variation

by David Wallace

In earlier eras, musicians like Mozart, Beethoven, and Paganini commonly improvised variations on popular tunes and opera arias to showcase their technical, creative, and expressive powers. Theme and variations made perfect crowd-pleasing encores, and, fortunately, quite a few virtuosi published examples so that we can learn their approach.[1]

I believe the ability to extemporize variations is well within the reach of any dedicated violist. Moreover, variation provides one of the easier entry points to composition and improvisation.

To begin exploring spontaneous variation, find some simple tunes to serve as themes. Books of folk songs, children's songs, patriotic tunes, or hymns provide great material, but you can vary melodies from popular music and other genres as well. Having four-part harmonizations or piano accompaniment in front of you will make your explorations easier.[2]

First, play the tune, memorize it, analyze the harmonies, play the chord progression, and practice the harmonies as arpeggios. Write the chord changes above the melody for reference. Once you've completely internalized the theme, you're ready to start improvising on it.

To take you through some of the most common variation techniques, I will start a variation on the French folk tune *Ah! Vous dirais-je Maman* (*Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*).[3] Play the example, then improvise the rest of the variation!

Ornamenting

Simply ornamenting the melody is one easy way to vary a theme. You can add trills, turns, grace notes, and other ornaments, but you can also fill in leaps with passing tones or decorate static pitches with neighbor tones (ex. 1).

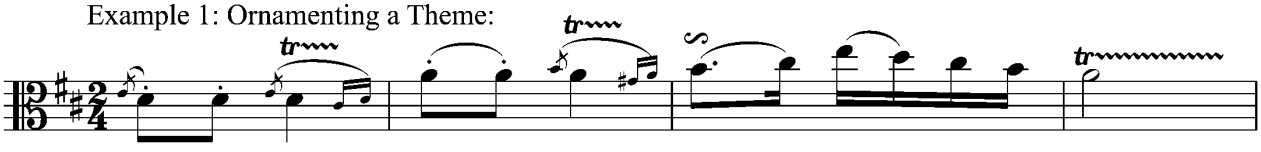
Practice ornamenting many melodies. Get a tune book, and ornament tune after tune. Try ornamenting in different styles: Baroque, Romantic, R & B, or other genres. Eventually, ornaments will become a ready resource for all of your variations.

Rhythmic Subdivision

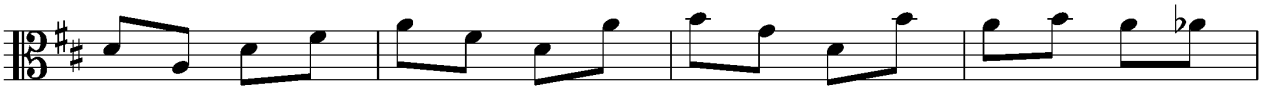
During the Classical period, composers relied on rhythmic subdivision as a standard variation technique. Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert commonly would compose variations in eighth notes, then triplets, then sixteenths (exs. 2–4).

When you explore this approach, try different ways of using the subdivision. You can arpeggiate chords, or you can use extra notes as neighbor tones, passing tones, escape tones, or changing tones. Reiterating pitches with the subdivision can be effective, especially in spiccato. Of course, if you feel an occasional need to play longer notes or different subdivisions, go right ahead.

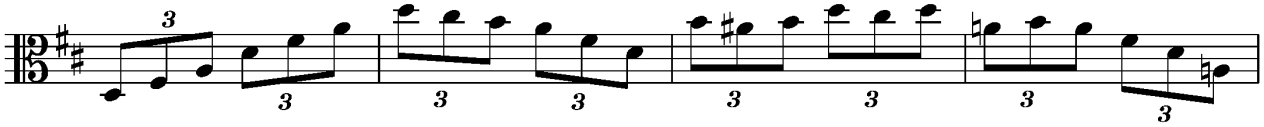
Example 1: Ornamenting a Theme:



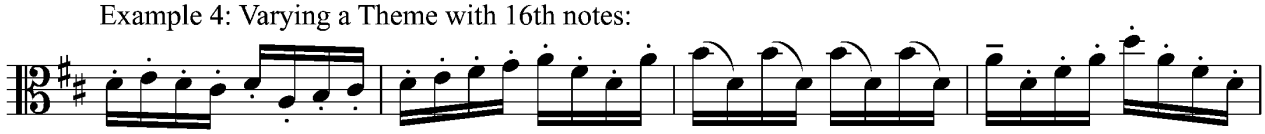
Example 2: Varying a Theme with 8th notes:



Example 3: Varying a Theme with triplets:



Example 4: Varying a Theme with 16th notes:



At first, you may find it easier to play a theme's original melody notes in the same spot where they occur rhythmically within the bar. As you get more comfortable, try playing melody notes sooner or later than usual. You can even skip a note or two altogether for the sake of an interesting shape.

See how much fun it is? But wait, we're not done with rhythmic variation yet! You should also explore varying the theme with rhythmic motives. Example 5 is a variation using one of Schubert's favorite rhythmic devices.

Varying rhythm alone can provide hours of inspiration.

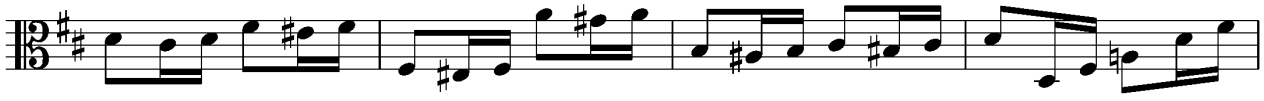
Double Stops

Double stops also provide extensive possibilities. You can focus on a single interval (thirds, sixths, octaves, etc.), mix different intervals, or even try your hand at varying the theme with chords (exs. 6–8).

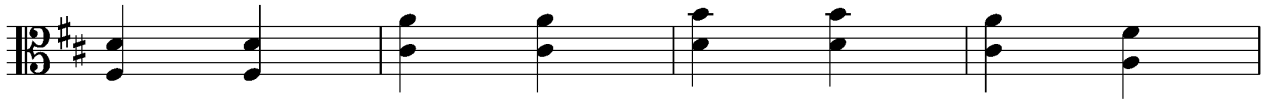
String-specific Techniques

As string players, we have a vast number of instrumental techniques that we can showcase as variation techniques: string crossings, bariolage, harmonics, pizzicato, open-string drones, and so on (ex. 9). Check out the variations of Paganini, Wieniawski,

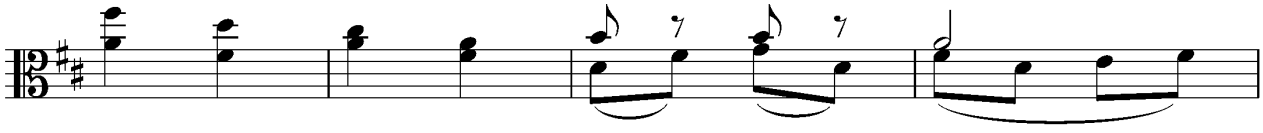
Example 5: Varying a Theme with a Rhythmic Motive:



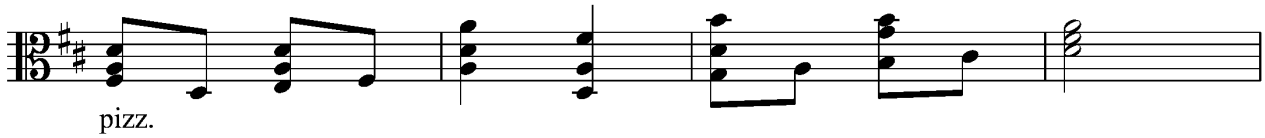
Example 6: Varying a Theme in Double Stops of a Fixed Interval:



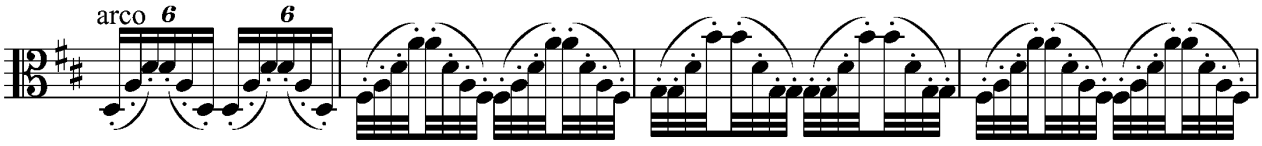
Example 7: Mixing Double Stops of Different Intervals within a Variation:



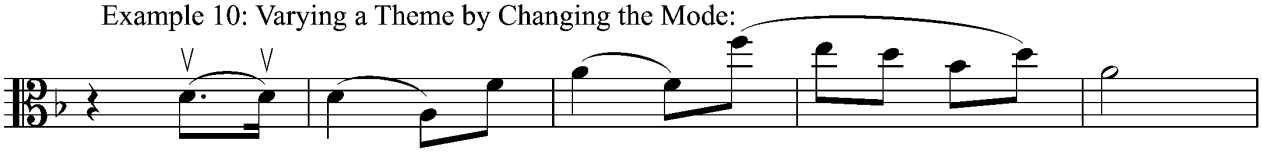
Example 8: Varying a Theme with Chords:



Example 9: Varying a Theme with Ricochet String Crossings:



Example 10: Varying a Theme by Changing the Mode:



Ernst, and other composers for inspiration. For more violistic examples, consult scores of Campagnoli (Caprices, op. 22, nos. 17 and 25), as well as works for viola and orchestra or piano (e.g., Joachim's *Variations on an Original Theme*, op. 10; Alan Shulman's *Theme and Variations for Viola and Orchestra*; Benjamin Britten's *Lachrymae*).

Other Techniques

Of course, we should also study theme and variations movements written for other instruments and ensembles. Note general variation techniques, like changing key or mode (ex. 10) or changing the meter (ex. 11).

You can also create variations in the style of a specific genre or school of composition (Baroque, Blues, Romantic, Second Viennese School) (ex. 12).

For that matter, it's possible to throw in a quotation of another tune.[4]

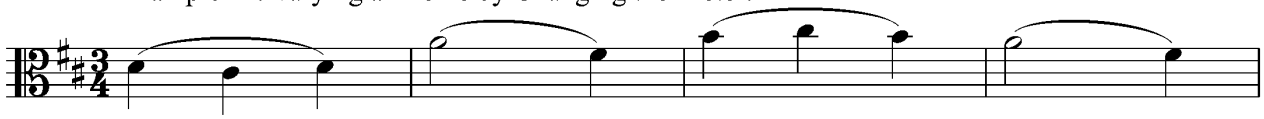
Once you become more comfortable with the various techniques, begin to combine multiple techniques within a single variation (ex. 13).

As your skill grows, consider how all the variations unfold in the context of your entire improvisation or composition. While most sets of variations treat variations as a succession of separate vignettes, together they should comprise a satisfying whole. With a little practice, you can even create transitions between your variations so that your work has a more through-composed feeling.

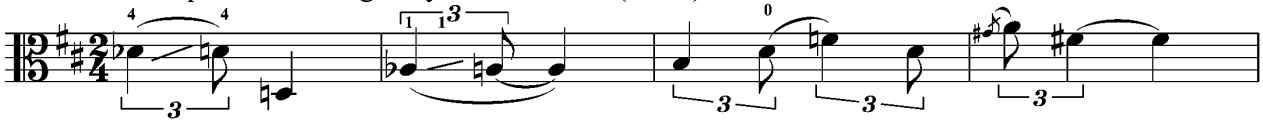
Composing your own variations away from the instrument will naturally strengthen your ability to improvise variations extemporaneously. Initially, just generate material; it doesn't have to be perfect.[5] The more you create, the easier and more natural it becomes. If in doubt, focus on variation techniques that showcase your personal strengths.

As an example, I'm including the sheet music and a recording of a viola caprice that I composed on the

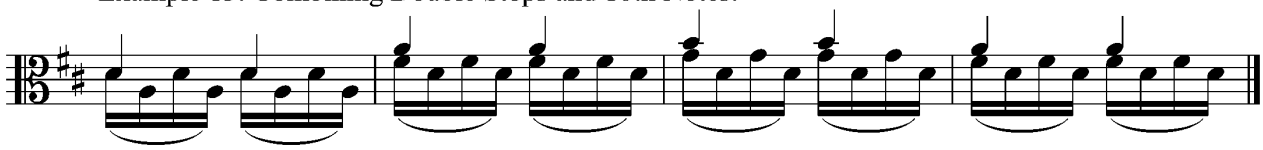
Example 11: Varying a Theme by Changing the Meter:



Example 12: Creating a Stylistic Variation (Blues)



Example 13: Combining Double Stops and 16th Notes:



spiritual *Were You There?*.[6] See what techniques I'm using and how the variations fit together. Use this theme to improvise or compose some additional variations of your own.

Above all, have fun!

Teaching artist, musician, and composer Dr. David Wallace teaches at Juilliard, Nyack College, Mark O'Connor/Berklee Summer Strings Program, Mark Wood Rock Orchestra Camp, and the New York Philharmonic's many educational programs while maintaining his active performing career. Learn more at his new website www.docwallacemusic.com and watch the THEME AND VARIATIONS playlist on his YouTube channel for further examples and ideas (www.youtube.com/docwallacemusic).

Notes

[1] This is an active article; go get your viola before reading any further!

[2] It's relatively simple to vary a theme using a harmony line as a basis for double stops or failsafe arpeggiation.

[3] After working with the theme for a while, see Mozart's *Twelve Variations on Ah! Vous dirais-je Maman*, K. 265/300e to learn from his variations. Then go to a Suzuki seminar and wreak havoc by teaching kids to improvise their own original variations.

[4] Back when I was in graduate school, violinist Uli Speth and I had a marathon session of trading "Twinkle, Twinkle Variations." About an hour into the session, I started weaving *Wozzeck* quotes into my improvisations. Uli parried with Puccini. (You probably already caught the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto quote in the minor-mode example above.)

[5] To improvise and compose good variations, you must be willing to risk creating some bad variations.

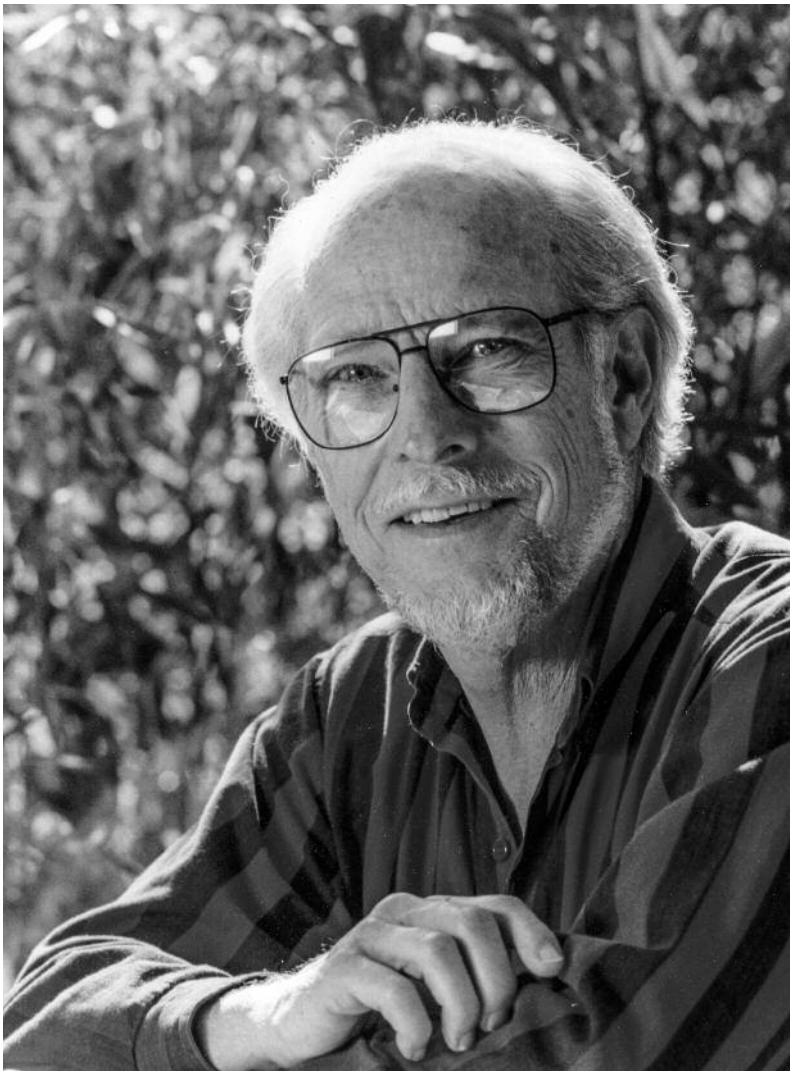
[6] Sheet music available at: http://americanviolasociety.org/resources/scores/javs-scores/; recording available at http://americanviolasociety.org/resources/recordings/.

Eastman to Host 2014–15 "From the Studio" Blog

Join us in the fall as we welcome the Eastman studios of Carol Rodland, George Taylor, and Phillip Ying for our third season of "From the Studio." These teachers and their students, along with teaching assistants and recent alumni, will address a range of issues facing the twenty-first century violist including technique, repertoire, interpretation, and pedagogy. Their thoughts, experiences, and discussions on specific topics will appear throughout the academic year. To submit questions for consideration, please write to Adam Cordle, AVS Media Coordinator, at usviolasociety@gmail.com. Readers can continue to enjoy posts from our first two years, hosted by the "ACHT" studios at Juilliard and the viola studios at Rice University, at: http://americanviolasociety.org/education/.

Retrospective

John Biggs Discusses His Viola Music



John Biggs

by John Biggs

I have long felt that composers should consider the viola as a solo instrument more often, particularly in the concerto genre, where there have been many more concertos for the violin and cello written over the years. I believe that if one handles the orchestration carefully, the viola works tremendously well as a solo instrument with orchestra. I'm writing this at a time when my connection with my most ambitious undertaking for the viola—the Concerto for Viola, Woodwinds, and Percussion—has recently been rekindled, since after a long period without a performance, in 2013 it received two! One took place as part of a celebration of my eightieth birthday and one while I was a guest composer at Wichita State University. In the first instance, it was performed by Los Angeles violist Victor de Almeida on February 2 in Ventura, California. In the second, the soloist was Catherine Consiglio, a member of the string faculty at Wichita State University, who performed it on March 28. I was the conductor on both occasions, and while I reacquainted myself with the piece after not hearing it for some time, I said to myself: "This piece should be performed more often." Perhaps one strike against it is the unusual instrumentation. It's a bit difficult to "pair" it with other chamber works.

I wrote the concerto in 1966 while doing graduate study at the University of Southern California, studying composition with Halsey Stevens. The choice of form, length, and ensemble was up to me. I had recently heard Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Suite for Viola and Small Orchestra* and thought it was a fine piece, and I fell in love with the sound of the viola as a solo instrument. And I also realized that there weren't many viola concertos around, so that's when I decided to make it a viola concerto. The ultimate scoring I decided on was two flutes, two clarinets, two bassoons, one percussionist, and viola, and

it was to be in one continuous movement. As I recall, the piece flowed out of me quite easily. I even remember being in a line waiting to pick up my teaching credential at the Board of Education in Los Angeles and asking a person to please save my place in line so I could write down a few ideas that were coming to me in a flash. Ah, the muse was very much with me at that time in my life.

So, having completed the piece, I put it aside, hoping that it would not linger long before there was a premiere somewhere, somehow. Shortly after this I received a call from the conductor of the Peter Britt Festival in Ashland, Oregon. His name was John Trudeau, and he had heard something of mine in a recent program and wanted to know if I would be interested in presenting a piece of mine at their festival. I quickly suggested the concerto, and after taking a look at the score, he was happy to give the go-ahead. I was to conduct, and Patricia Miller, principal violist of the Oregon Symphony, was to be the soloist. (I recently learned that Patricia retired from the Oregon Symphony in 2006, after playing with them for fifty-six years. A commendable career, I must say.) The premiere took place on August 20, 1968, and there's one aspect of that performance that I'll never forget. As I walked onto the podium, the first flutist was looking pale as a ghost. She had left her part at home, forgetting to put it back in her folder on the way to the concert. I, being a person who tends to think ahead of things that could go wrong in a concert, had taken the precaution of packing an extra set of parts in my briefcase. I quickly went back stage, got the part, handed it to the flutist—the color in her cheeks came back—and we began the piece.

I would say that the audience's reaction to the piece was exceptionally enthusiastic, and it garnered a standing ovation. The soloist took a number of bows, and when I asked the instrumentalists to stand, there was an even greater response. I believe the audience truly appreciated the musicianship of the performers, especially since none of them had ever heard nor seen the piece before. It was a brave endeavor all round.

Since that auspicious premiere, and because I don't have a manager to promote my work, the piece has not had a great number of performances. However, when I had occasion to hear the English violist Paul Silverthorne perform with the Santa Barbara Symphony sometime in the early 90s, I chose him for the first professional recording of the work, which took place in Prague in 2000 with Paul Freeman conducting members of the Czech National Symphony Orchestra. This I consider to be a definitive performance of the work.

As for the other viola music in my catalog, I must say that the best-selling piece is my *Invention for Viola and Tape*, which was commissioned by violist Hugh Partridge, who was on the faculty of Wichita State University at the same time that I was on the faculty of Kansas State Teachers College in Emporia, Kansas, in the early 70s. Shortly after his premiere of the piece in 1972, I had a visit from the New York violist and teacher Paul Doktor, who took an immediate liking to the piece and proceeded to play it around the world on his many concert tours including a performance at the 1977 International Viola Congress at the Eastman School of Music. His student Paul Neubauer, who was eleven years old at the time, performed it at the University of Southern California around 1974. Subsequently violists Cynthia Phelps, Raymond Tischer, Tom Tatton, and Victor de Almeida have performed it, among others. The "tape" part is now, of course, on CD.

You might ask about the use of the word "invention" in the title. This stems from my love for the *Inventions* by J. S. Bach, which I learned as a piano student. Each was so different, so well-crafted and original, and part of a larger collection of pieces with the same compositional endeavors. So I set out to create a series of my own, and now, in addition to the one for viola, there are those for flute, cello, organ, violin, and piano, each with recorded accompaniment on CD. And you might also ask why I chose to write them for solo instrument and recorded accompaniment. There are three reasons for this. First, it gives the performer the freedom to practice the piece without having to schedule rehearsal time with other performers. Second, I had heard a num-

ber of pieces in the 70s that had taped accompaniment, and many of them had the soloist locked into compliance with strict tempos at all times, and I found this confining. In each of my pieces I strived to give the soloist plenty of rhythmic freedom here and there. Third, this allowed me to use sounds from nature in the pieces, such as a thunderstorm in the piano invention, or bird songs in the flute invention, or children's voices in the viola invention.

The other two chamber pieces that feature the viola are my *Excursions*, for violin and viola, and *Cowboy Miniatures*. The *Excursions* are written in a neo-classical/neo-baroque style and are in the form of a suite consisting of six movements: Overture, Tango, Chase, Devil Dance, Chorale, and Finale. They are not virtuosic but are challenging and very audience friendly.

The *Cowboy Miniatures* is a set of ten popular cowboy songs. They were written as pedagogical pieces and are essentially duets with the easier student part on the bottom and the teacher's part on the top. They are also available in a version for two violins and a version for two cellos and are punctuated with attractive illustrations of various cowboy paraphernalia.

Sheet music for Biggs's viola works is available from Consort Press at: http://consortpress.com/Orders.html. A recording of the Concerto for Viola, Woodwinds, and Percussion is available on the CD Paul Freeman Introduces John Biggs *(Albany Records, TROY 394, 2000). This CD may be purchased directly from Consort Press, and sound clips may be heard at http://consortpress.com/Discography.html.*

Born in Los Angeles on October 18, 1932, John Biggs received his Master's degree in composition from the University of California at Los Angeles, doing further study at the University of Southern California and the Royal Flemish Conservatory in Antwerp, Belgium. His teachers include Roy Harris, Lukas Foss, Ingolf Dahl, Flor Peeters, Halsey Stevens, and Leonard Stein. He has taught at Los Angeles City College, UCLA, and UC Berkeley and served as composer-in-residence to six colleges in Kansas under a grant from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. As a composer, he has won numerous awards and honors including a Rockefeller Grant, Fulbright Grant, Atwater-Kent Award, ASCAP "Serious Music Award" every year since 1974, and a number of "Meet the Composer" grants from diverse parts of the United States.

JOIN THE CROWD(FUNDING)

Crista Kende Bergendahl with the viola funded by her Indiegogo campaign

by Crista Kende Bergendahl

In the spring of 2010 I had just received my Master's from The Juilliard School, and I was headed to Switzerland to play with the Verbier Festival Orchestra; ready to embrace the life of a freelance musician upon my return to New York. Just a few months later, my excitement turned into frustration as I experienced the scarcity of job opportunities first-hand. To relieve some pressure, I sought part-time employment at Indiegogo, a global online crowdfunding platform. I knew nothing about crowdfunding, but within my first few days on the job I realized that Indiegogo was providing a tremendous opportunity for artists to take control of their careers instead of lamenting the status quo. Today, I am the Performing Arts Specialist at Indiegogo and offer personalized (free!) coaching for campaigners while raising general awareness of crowdfunding in the arts.

Before I dared to advise others, I thought it wise to run a campaign myself to fully understand the crowdfunding process. I used Indiegogo to fund a viola purchase, since I had previously relied on a loan from a foundation that wanted their viola back. As expected, my campaign elicited a broad spectrum of public reactions—from musicians who were excited by this potentially groundbreaking new model to those voicing vehement disdain for what they saw as a desperate attempt at panhandling. Either way, I was happy to get people talking about crowdfunding! With anything new, it's natural for there to be fear and misconceptions, which is why I would like to dispel a few of the most pervasive crowdfunding myths.

"With so many musicians struggling to make their way, why do you deserve my help?"

Crowdfunding isn't about who is and who isn't deserving of help, because it's not about asking for help. It's about having the courage to tell your story, presenting your idea to the crowd, and inviting peo-

ple to join you. It's not a last resort or something reserved for those in dire straits. Instead, crowdfunding is for empowered musicians who are ready to determine their own success. The arts are inherently a communal activity, and crowdfunding is just a modern version of the Medici patronage model. With the power of the Internet and social media, we can connect with many small patrons and pool resources to make projects happen instead of waiting for one big career-changing angel (who sadly never visits most of us). When wondering why people contribute to crowdfunding campaigns aside from the desire to "help," remember the four "P's":

Passion: contributors care about person/cause;
Perk: contributors want the perk, pre-sale, product;
Participation: contributors want to be part of a community that makes dreams possible;
Pride: contributors feel a sense of pride in funding worthy projects.

"How is crowdfunding different from panhandling?"

Crowdfunding is not about begging for donations, hoping for good luck, or wishing for money to mysteriously flow into your account. Crowdfunding is about creating a legitimate online marketplace for demonstrating artistic skills, engaging fans, offering unique experiences, and receiving contributions to make a specific project possible. Notice that I say "contributions" and not "donations," which implies charitable giving. In most cases, contributors receive "perks" as a token of thanks. With my campaign, each contributor received a perk corresponding to contribution size, including thank-you notes, recordings, private lessons, and private concerts. I put careful thought into considering exactly what I had to offer as an artist that would be of value to my fans, making sure that each perk was cost effective and wouldn't be time-intensive to produce and deliver. I was not accepting mythical "free money." I was offering items in return for upfront funding. In some ways the transaction that occurs on a crowdfunding site is no different from standard online shopping experiences where there is an exchange of cash for goods. As an exciting alternative to laborious grant applications and risky bank loans, crowdfunding offers more than just funds and allows artists to build lasting relationships that survive the simple exchange of cash. Musicians from Carnegie Hall's Ensemble ACJW raised more than $25,000 to launch Decoda, an ensemble of performing musicians who also engage in education and outreach activities. Through Indiegogo, these musicians connected with people who were passionate about the ensemble's work, and they created a database of funders who could be cultivated into repeat contributors, advocates, and loyal audience members.

"I'm a musician—I'm not trained to crowdfund!"

As musicians, we are experts at spending grueling hours a day in the practice room and controlling our nerves on stage. But when it comes to networking, promotions, and raising money—we'd rather endure an enervating dentist appointment. Today's musician must do more than just master an instrument (as if that's not hard enough!). We must be advocates for the arts and serve as our own publicists, embracing a more entrepreneurial mindset than our predecessors. Many crowdfunding sites offer tools and training to assist with fundraising; Indiegogo offers extensive educational resources designed to make the crowdfunding process less daunting. To further relieve the pressure, Indiegogo offers a unique "flexible funding" option so campaigners can keep whatever they raise, even if they don't reach their goal. I recently worked with Jessica Garand, a fellow Juilliard violist, founder of *Opportunity Music Project*, and a first-time campaigner who raised more than $10,000. She writes, "At first, launching a crowdfunding campaign seemed like such a big project, but with Indiegogo's easy-to-use format and excellent coaching and support throughout, the whole experience was exciting and successful!" Crowdfunding is not guesswork, and there are clear strategies for success.

Plan, plan, plan: Just like everything else, taking the time to educate yourself pays off, so talk to specialists and artists who have crowdfunded. Plan your budget, come up with unique and well-priced perks, and make an authentic and engaging pitch video. Videos don't have to be Oscar-worthy productions—they should be personal, informative, and concise. On average, campaigns with videos raise 114% more than

those without, and campaigns offering three or more perks are substantially more likely to reach their goal.

Be proactive: Don't expect the money to magically flow once you go live. Running a campaign is an active process—the more you share the greater chance you'll have of finding people who care about what you're doing. On average, campaigns using Indiegogo's "update" feature to communicate with contributors every one to five days raise 239% more money, and campaigns posting new media—pictures, videos, milestone announcements—raise 81% more money. Campaigns with four or more external links raise 103% more, so link up your YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, website, LinkedIn—anything that helps people see what you're all about.

Believe in what you're doing, and know your network: Start small with a project you believe in. For first-time campaigners, it's wise to set an attainable goal based on the size and devotion of your existing following. The first 30% of contributions should come from your inner circle—family, friends, and colleagues who care about your work. From there, it's easier to attract people from outside your immediate network, since you'll have demonstrated a level of traction and success. Furthermore, keep your campaign to less than sixty days to drive momentum. People figure that a longer campaign gives them more time to gather contributions, but on Indiegogo, the average successful campaign hits its goal on day forty-seven. With a shorter campaign, people have a constant call to action, since the end goal is always in sight.

We are at an exciting new juncture in the arts world. Musicians who have long felt powerless when it comes to making important career moves now have a powerful new voice and a way to build their own success through crowdfunding. When I look back to the spring of 2010, I'm glad I experienced that traditional post-Master's career panic, since it forced me to think creatively and discover Indiegogo and all that it offers the modern musician.

For more information on crowdfunding and personalized campaign coaching, contact Crista at crista@indiegogo.com.

Crista Kende Bergendahl holds a Master's degree in viola performance from The Juilliard School and attended Princeton University to study history with a focus on the arts in society. She approaches her work with Indiegogo from the standpoint of a performing artist with more than fifteen years of professional experience and an acute understanding of the challenges of being an artist in today's world. It is her goal to empower fellow musicians and artistic colleagues to look beyond traditional funding models and use Indiegogo to connect with fans, build an audience base, and raise essential funds for creative pursuits.

A Recording for the Chiaroscuro Trio

by Aurélien Pétillot

The Chiaroscuro Trio was formed in 2010 out of the strong friendship of its musicians, contralto Elizabeth Pétillot, pianist Yuko Kato, and me, violist Aurélien Pétillot. After a few years together, rehearsing, performing, exploring repertoire, connecting with our audiences, and building interest, we decided that we should release a CD. The European Romantic masterpieces of Brahms, Bridge, Loeffler, and Strauss for our instrumentation had already been recorded, and though we frequently champion those works on stage, we felt strongly that we should offer something different and new. We opted for world premiere recordings of contemporary American works and submitted a proposal to Albany Records, because of their strong focus on American composers and performers. Very naïvely, we thought that signing a contract with a major label implied that the whole project would be financed, from the initial idea way beyond the release of the finished product. The hardest thing was probably to get a contract in the first place. In reality, Albany liked the project and very promptly offered us a contract, but we had to not only pay for everything, including travel and studio costs as well as our two commissioned works, but we also had to dish out $4,500 to Albany to cover printing, duplicating, and distributing. It became obvious that we would need a lot of help. We drafted a budget, applied for two research grants through our respective universities (Southern Illinois University Carbondale and the University of

Members of the Chiaroscuro Trio, from left to right: Elizabeth Pétillot, Aurélien Pétillot, and Yuko Kato (photo courtesy of Amber McConnell, Red Rogue Studio)

Wisconsin-Eau Claire), and launched a Kickstarter campaign.

We received both grants relatively easily and quickly for a total of $11,000. We still needed $10,000, which became our goal for the Kickstarter campaign. We contacted everybody we knew, repeatedly shared our project with them, and introduced them to the works on the CD, while reminding them of our all-or-nothing deadline that stipulated that we would lose all of our pledged donations if we didn't reach our goal in time. We also advertised as heavily and frequently as possible on social media. Our families not only contributed but collected donations from their circles of friends. Many friends and colleagues backed us as well. Most surprising was the support from our featured composers, from friends we hadn't seen in years, and especially from people we only knew tangentially. A few complete strangers who were particularly excited about Rob Deemer's *Erotica* song cycle and a new setting of the *Jabberwocky* by Graham Reynolds very unexpectedly chipped in as well.

We had studied what other successful Kickstarter campaigns had done and what kind of thank-you gifts they were offering. Unsurprisingly, we noticed that most people usually gave less than $100. Our campaign also confirmed this tendency: over a third of our backers decided to give between $25 and $100 to receive either a digital download of the whole album or a CD signed and personalized by the trio. Our thank-you gifts to our backers included a digital download of four tracks at the $15 level, invitations to our CD release parties at the $100+ level, a VIP dinner with the members of the trio at the $1,000+ level, and a private concert and a framed autographed score of one of our commissions at the $5,000+ level. We easily distributed our digital downloads via SoundCloud and Dropbox. Sending the signed CDs proved more problematic: we had only received fifty free copies from Albany Records and had to purchase one hundred additional copies at $5 each. In addition, since Yuko doesn't live in the same state as Elizabeth and I, we had to ship her the CDs so that she could sign them and then forward them to each of our backers, many of whom live abroad. We should have obviously better anticipated the costs of the extra CDs and the steep international shipping rates. We nonetheless still managed to deliver our rewards and invite donors to our CD release parties if we were performing in their respective cities, as promised. Our two highest donors gave at the $1,000 level. They were family members who opted to forego the VIP dinner.

Eventually, our campaign was very successful, and we surpassed our fundraising goal, allowing us to record in optimal conditions and to produce a CD that we are very proud of, while (re)kindling deep, humbling, and fortifying friendships in the process.

For a review of the Chiaroscuro Trio's new CD, please see the recording reviews on page 63.

Violist Dr. Aurélien Pétillot has garnered much esteem as a versatile and engaging performer and pedagogue. A passionate chamber musician and an ardent advocate of music by living composers, he is a founding member of the Chiaroscuro Trio and the founder and artistic director of the non-profit concert series Viola by Choice. He is currently lecturer of viola and music theory at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and the principal violist of the Camerata Chicago.

A Viola for Elliot Corner

by Elliot Corner

Elliot Corner is a nineteen-year-old student who is studying viola and composition at the Royal College of Music in the UK as a Foundation Scholar (generously supported by The Henriette Schoeller Harrison Elt and Anatole Mines Award and a Douglas and Hilda Simmonds Award). He utilized crowdfunding to pay for the majority of his instrument, a 17" viola made by British specialist viola maker David Milward in 1995 valued at £6,000. He shares his thoughts on the usefulness of crowdfunding for a modern musician in a modern life below.

I personally never could have afforded such a fine instrument had it not been for the brilliant concept of crowdfunding. Coming from a low-income and non-musical background makes such an expensive and sometimes exclusive profession like classical music quite difficult to get a foothold in. Nevertheless, my parents have both always gone the extra mile to help me in my endeavors and have sup-

Elliot Corner with his Milward viola (photo courtesy of Sheila Burnett)

ported me fully since I first picked up a violin at the age of five.

Financial support is unfortunately finite, so even though my mother was working multiple part-time jobs to pay for my music tuition, I have relied on many charitable grants to fully support my education throughout my fourteen years as a musician (so far!). I have been lucky enough to have charities such as The Pebble Trust, the Musician's Benevolent Fund, and Awards for Young Musicians provide financial assistance to help afford lessons, bows, and music.

I changed permanently from violin to viola at seventeen, a year and a half before my conservatory auditions, which was made possible by the generosity of a friend of my father—a lovely man named Michael Mercer, who sadly passed away a few years ago and stipulated in his will that he wanted his 16 1/4" Andrea Kathrin Dürr viola to go to a young person who would make good use of it and cherish it. I had this viola in my house for a few months and continued studies on the violin, intending to take up the viola as a secondary instrument. I realized around this time that I was very technically limited on the violin, as it was far too small for my large frame of six feet three inches! I made the large decision to take up the viola permanently and discontinue my studies on the violin.

It soon became apparent that even this 16 1/4" viola was too small for me. While I previously had been able to sell past instruments to "upgrade," this time sentiment made that impossible with the Dürr viola. Upon asking various violists for advice, one name kept cropping up: British maker David Milward, who specializes in making violas. He happened to have an older 17" viola of his in the workshop, and upon playing it for the first time I knew it was the right instrument for me. However, finding the entire £6,000 purchase price was going to be very difficult, even if I attained multiple charitable grants. To even gather a deposit to secure the instrument was nigh impossible for me financially.

I'd discovered crowdfunding a few months previously and considered using it to fund a concert that I was putting on but was dissuaded by the amount of work that I predicted it would take. This time, it seemed that it was going to be the most sensible and secure option to try and raise the money for an instrument. I discussed this with David Milward and the person on whose behalf he was selling, and though (understandably) they were at first skeptical, I convinced them that it was worth a try. I set up my campaign using the London-based website PleaseFund.Us (now known as zequs.com). Incidentally, the well-known website Kickstarter actually turned my project down, because they require a "creative outcome" of a project, and it seems that buying a new viola is not enough of a creative outcome!

I chose PleaseFund.Us as it was a local company and was relatively new at the time, so there were not only fewer projects competing for a voice there, but the staff members were incredibly friendly and supportive and did all that they could to push my campaign. I decided to try for only half of the money (£3,000) on the website, as this was an all-or-nothing campaign (meaning that if I did not raise my entire goal that I would receive none of the pledges). I was playing it safe, to make sure that I had at least something to pay the deposit and make a start toward paying for the viola.

It kicked off very solidly, raising about one-third of my total in two days! I had one supporter pledge £750 within the first twenty-four hours, which was so encouraging to see. Most backers I knew somehow or were linked to me through their being alumni of my old schools, but quite a few were viola players and musicians from around the world who had seen my project and genuinely wanted to help. There was a large patch of time in the middle of the thirty days that I'd given to the campaign where I had little to no pledges at all, but I was assured that this is quite normal and persevered with sharing my campaign page all over the place. Toward the last week pledges increased, and I managed to pass my goal to £3,062 with a week to spare.

The best outcome of the campaign was surprisingly not financial; it was actually that I met some really interesting and dedicated individuals through doing it, and I really have opened new doors to opportunities that I may not have had otherwise. The knock-on effect of the successful campaign was that through the publicity from it I managed to raise the incredible sum of a further £2,400. This was for a number of reasons—some individuals didn't feel comfortable using an Internet donation site and sent checks or cash. Two local lunchtime concert series in Brighton, upon hearing of my crowdfunding campaign, asked me to give a concert for them and pledged a split from the concert donations toward completing the total goal of £6,000.

The link to my crowdfunding page was shared over five hundred times on Facebook throughout the course of the campaign (at least forty of those were from me), but this sort of publicity would be very expensive if you tried to purchase it! Never underestimate the power of social media.

What I did completely underestimate was the amount of work that this project would take, which is something that I wish I had known beforehand. You will need to be able to think outside of the box to come up with decent marketing plans for publicizing the campaign. The staff from the crowdfunding platforms who work with you on the project are invaluable; utilize their help as much as possible—they have an established base of relevant and potentially interested contacts who can certainly help with the promotion and advertising elements of crowdfunding. My one piece of advice would be to share, share, and share some more on top of that. The more you talk about your campaign on the Internet, the more it will gain interest, web hits, shares, likes, retweets, and exposure. Remember that if just 6 people with 400 friends each share a link on Facebook, they have potentially reached up to 2,400 people.

I have now paid in full for my new viola, and every time I play it I receive compliments on the incredibly unique sound that it makes. An added bonus to this is that every time I play it, I think of the wonderful people that all helped to make my dream possible. That maybe is the true blessing of crowdfunding—making dreams possible, making new connections, and allowing creativity to flourish on a global scale.

Visit http://americanviolasociety.org/resources/scores/multiple-violaensemble-music/ to find an arrangement of the Wexford Carol *for four violas, one of the perks from Elliot Corner's crowdfunding campaign.*

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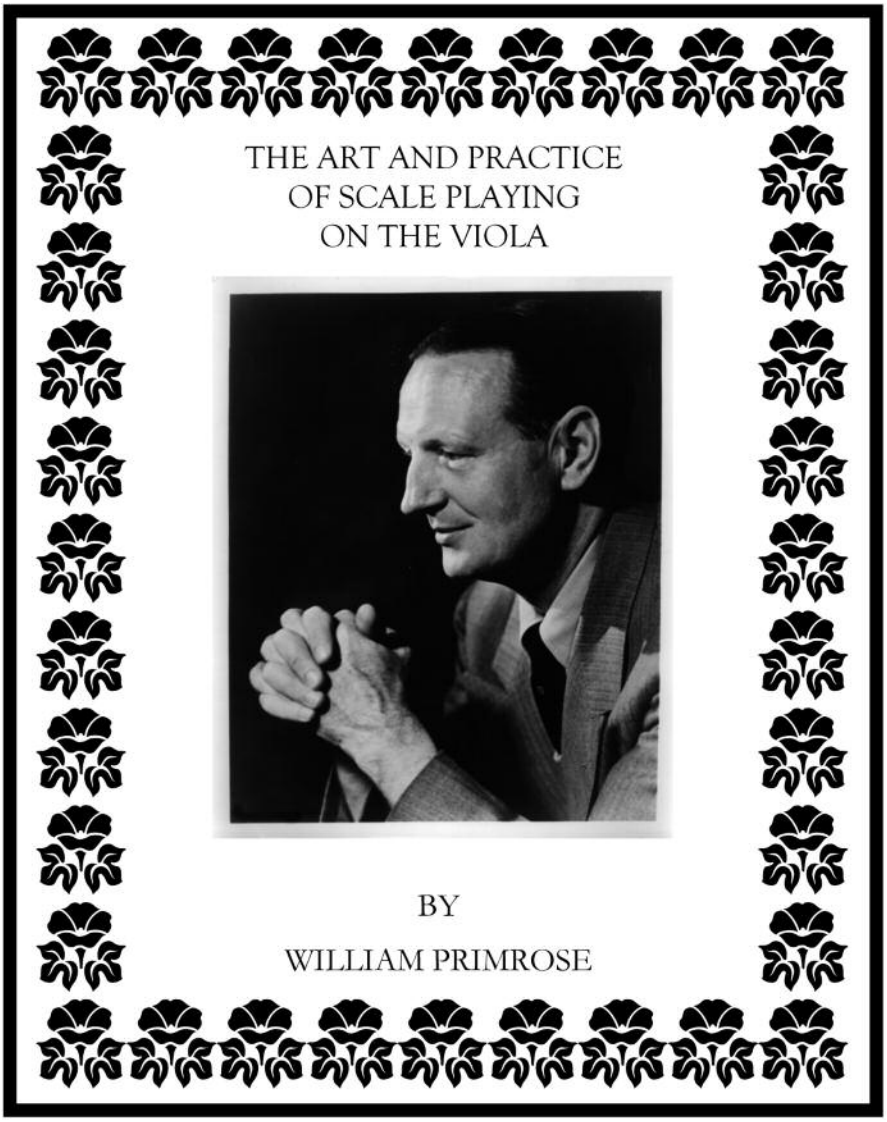

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With Viola in Hand

Meet the ¡Voila! Viola Trio

by Alexander Peña

¡Voila! is a prize-winning viola trio devoted to the expansion and awareness of ensemble repertoire for the commonly left out "middle child" of the string family—the viola. Trio-mates Benjamin Magruder, Alexander Peña, and Samantha Rodriguez seek to provide audiences with a fresh understanding of the soloistic possibilities that the viola has to offer by programming varied repertoire while upholding a spunky disposition that kindly waves "goodbye" to old-fashioned assumptions found in any "viola joke."

Jokes aside, our group is a serious ensemble of conservatory-trained musicians who began to forge a path never explored quite like it before. Emerging in 2012, ¡Voila! embarked on rehearsals, coachings, and recordings leading to winning accolades in two national string chamber-music competitions as possibly the first viola-only ensemble in competition history. After winning the Eastern Chamber Music String division of the 2012–13 MTNA Chamber Music Competition, we placed second in the Nationals, and we competed in the finals of the 2013 Coleman Chamber Music Competition. Besides not fitting into any traditional ensemble configuration or instrumentation, our group battled to convince the judges that the viola was not just an instrument of modest harmonic support but also an instrument of unique beauty and poetic voice, deserving of showcase! In addition, programming music, or locating music suitable for prestigious competitions, proved to be another challenge. Like most emerging bands or ensembles, there were plenty of other hurdles along the path.

Meet the members of ¡Voila! and uncover our story about taking chances in the chamber-music competition scene. As young professional musicians in between college and career, each member of ¡Voila! has a story that can relate to many young musicians considering the profession, especially those nearing the end of their studies.

The ¡Voila! trio, from left to right: Samantha Rodriguez, Alexander Peña, and Benjamin Magruder (photo courtesy of Anjali Bermain Photography)

Samantha Rodriguez, twenty-seven years old, is a native of Mastic Beach, New York. She came to Eastman with a dream to win an orchestral job. Achieving that dream while pursuing graduate work, Sam has nearly five years of professional playing experience with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition, she serves on the faculty of SUNY (State University of New York) Geneseo while enjoying a vivid freelance career.

Alexander Peña, twenty-five years old, was born in Southern California, although he began and contin-

ued his musical studies in San Antonio, Texas. Already an accomplished educator, Peña was recently appointed Director and Lead Teacher for ROCmusic, an El Sistema-inspired program in collaboration with Eastman in Rochester. Alexander also serves on the faculty of the Eastman Community Music School, where he directs ensembles and teaches viola and violin.

Benjamin Magruder, twenty-three years old, hails from Columbia, Maryland. The youngest of the bunch, Ben enjoys an active career of freelancing and private-studio teaching. Magruder also enjoys improvising and writing, thus serving as the trio's main connection to composing, adapting, and finding new repertoire.

During the summer, all three of ¡Voila!'s members perform and teach as Artists in Residence at the Lakes Area Music Festival (LAMF) in Central Minnesota. Most recently, our professional and collegial collaboration with LAMF spurred the creation of *Explore Music*, a week-long creative-arts day camp for children K–5.

The future for ¡Voila! includes recital engagements across Western New York in 2014, while working on recording the group's first compilation of repertoire. Our diverse repertoire includes works originally for three violas: *Capricious*, by American composer Scott Slapin (freely available on the AVS's website), and *Spiral 1*, by Australian composer Robert Davidson (freely available on the IMSLP website). Transcriptions or adaptations of other works range from wind music by Beethoven to Spanish Renaissance music that is seldom performed. ¡Voila! would like to continue to expose our unique group-sound to composers with the hope of fostering original works. Future plans also include formally editing transcriptions/adaptations that the trio has worked on with the goal of uploading such works to websites or online music "banks," like the AVS, for violists to enjoy in the future.

¡Voila! is well aware of the challenges that lay before us. Dealing with age-old instrumental prejudice in a very traditional classical music genre conjures the mental image of some kind of silly uphill battle; a challenge that energizes and amuses the group. Each member contributes to the mission of the trio while balancing and maintaining a professional musical career. Reflecting on our college experience and the difficult transitional time after school, the trio encourages young musicians to think entrepreneurially, develop skills apart from their musical craft, and to take chances that they believe in.

Reflecting on our group's beginnings, the members of the trio reminisce about the 40th International Viola Congress, hosted at Eastman in 2012. Never having been in attendance at such a viola-specific event, the then future-members of ¡Voila! were struck with inspiration and dreamed about what else the viola could do. Magruder speaks of his admiration and respect for the plethora of musical experiences that most certainly come along with any international viola congress, commenting, "But it was the congeniality and love within the world-wide community of violists that resonated the most with us, ultimately leaving us with a burning desire to continue to make music in our professional lives while remaining passionate about two things—the viola and our longtime friendship."

¡Voila! members with former AVS President Helen Callus at the 2013 Coleman Chamber Music Competition

To see an interview and performances by ¡Voila! on WXXI's Backstage Pass*, please visit: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TmB-ufuwrI&feature=share.*

Book Review

Viola Music and Chamber Music with Viola, Recorded in the 20th Century

Reviewed by David Hermann

Viola Music and Chamber Music with Viola, Recorded in the 20th Century
By Edward Strenkowski
ISBN: 978-0-9696098-7-2
Price: $550

Violists and record collectors alike fondly remember the efforts of Dr. François de Beaumont, whose love of the uniquely beautiful sound of the viola led him to create in 1973 the first discography of works specifically featuring that instrument. Before his untimely passing in 1982, his *Discographie sur l'Alto* had been revised and expanded three times to include many unusual commercial viola recordings from all over the world—but only those released through the year 1980.

For more than thirty years we have awaited a successor to Dr. de Beaumont's pioneering efforts, and now I'm happy to report that there is a new viola discography that will be sure to please audiophiles and violists alike. The book is titled *Viola Music and Chamber Music with Viola, Recorded in the 20th Century*; the author is Edward Strenkowski; and it is published in Canada by Records Past Publishing. Strenkowski was also the editor and publisher of the second edition of James Creighton's monumental *Discopædia of the Violin*, so his credentials in the research of old recordings are well-established.

Viola Music contains information on approximately thirty thousand original-issue recordings and reissues, and while Creighton's *Discopædia of the Violin* was arranged by performer, Strenkowski has wisely chosen to arrange *Viola Music* by composer and repertoire, making it the ideal vehicle for teachers and students who wish to locate recordings for study purposes. In any event, a complete index of the two thousand or so violists included in *Viola Music* enables the user to easily find any recording by a specific violist.

Running to 819 pages, *Viola Music and Chamber Music with Viola* is the result of three decades of research dedicated to the art of the viola on record. Its scope is vast, comprising a list of recorded compositions in which the viola is at least one of the principal instruments used, as explained in the author's introduction. This includes solo works, concerti, ensemble music employing two to ten instrumentalists, and orchestral compositions with prominent solos for the viola. (Those familiar with de Beaumont's editions will remember that he only listed chamber compositions involving no more than three interpreters, and even at that he excluded the traditional string trio as being perhaps too large a category.) The one obvious concession to moderation in *Viola Music* is the absence of recordings of the traditional string quartet, which certainly makes sense to me; the sheer number of quartet recordings would have made *Viola Music* a very unwieldy volume. That said, there are still a great many chamber works included here that were not covered by de Beaumont.

The introductory material includes a list of abbreviations for instruments and ensembles and symbols for recording formats (everything from cylinders to CDs, reel tapes to Digital Compact Cassettes, and videotapes to DVDs), composer thematic catalog number designations, and other abbreviations and acronyms used in entries. Musical selections are properly identified to the extent that Schubert's *Ave Maria* is correctly listed as *Ellens Gesang*, D. 839 (1825). But should you look under *Ave Maria* instead, you will be directed to the latter listing. This is but one indication of the length to which the author goes to make the text practical to use while maintaining accuracy in the listings.

The format used is an easily readable four-column text printed on a page size of 8.5 by 11 inches. Each listing provides (where available) the composer's name; birth- and death-dates; title and opus or works number and year of completion; instrumentation; section of work performed; arranged instrumentation and arranger; performer(s) and instrument(s); recording date; matrix numbers; and finally, record manufacturer/label name, format, number, and issue/re-issue dates. Additional information about the order in which performers' names are listed (to find a particular Sixth Brandenburg Concerto recording, for instance) is also given.

As befits the importance of this reference work, it comes with a beautiful and durable hardcover library binding that will keep the pages free from significant wear after many years of searches, which is fortunate because even the casual collector will want to spend hours looking through this book. Many surprises and lost treasures await: Emanuel Vardi's earliest solo recordings on Royale 78s (including his transcendently beautiful Rolla Sonata in E-flat); William Primrose's CD of Suzuki Viola School selections (one of his last recordings, available only in Japan); Maurice Vieux's recording of Golestan's *Arioso et allegro de concert* (from May 1933, a rare solo recording by the French master); and a surprising number of 78 rpm discs by Watson Forbes, the tireless Scots violist who, after Tertis and Primrose, was the most recorded viola player of the 78 era. There are many unusual recordings to be found among later issues as well, right up to the book's cutoff date of 2000. The advent of the compact disc in the last quarter of the twentieth century was a boon to those collectors who despaired of hearing new recordings of "niche" repertoire on LPs. The result was a veritable explosion of interesting viola CDs, as a glance at nearly every page of *Viola Music* will demonstrate.

The many years of research that went into *Viola Music and Chamber Music with Viola* and the care with which the book has been assembled are reflected in the high quality of the production. It may not be a surprise, then, when one discovers that this book is not inexpensive—it costs $550, with the added benefit of free postage anywhere in the world (and if my shipment was any indication, an expert packing job to protect your investment). While the price may seem high, it is fair compensation for the many years of devotion to the project by Strenkowski and his two editors, Liz and John Fodi. *Viola Music* is to the record enthusiast what Zeyringer's *Literatur für Viola* is to the collector of printed music. It is my hope that this wonderful book finds its way to every public and university library and into many a private collection whose owner has an interest in the history of the viola. It is an invaluable tool for the serious violist.

This edition of *Viola Music and Chamber Music with Viola, Recorded in the 20th Century* is limited to 250 copies. Inquiries about, or orders for the book, may be addressed to the author at estren@shaw.ca.

David Hermann is a violist in the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra. He has been collecting viola recordings for over forty years, and discs from his collection have been used in CD releases by Pearl, Biddulph, Music & Arts, Lys, Naxos, Doremi, and Cembal d'amour. His project Lionel Tertis: The Complete Vocalion Recordings *was awarded Best Compilation of the Year 2008 by* Classical Recordings Quarterly *magazine.*

BACH, J.S., BWV 1051

{vla}
{vla}
{gmb}
{gmb}
{vlc} &
{ },
Alfred Cortot, conductor
[2 Feb. 1931]
(matrix 2W 1033-1, 2W 1034-3, 2W 1035-2 & 2W 1036-1)
HMV ● DB 1626/7 [1932]
Victrola ● 11264/5 [1932]
Victrola ● *4225/6 [1933]*
Koch ○ 3-7705-2 [1993]
EMI ○ 653-567 211-2 [1999]
EMI ○ CHS5 67211-2 [2000]

Members of Stuttgarter Solisten:
Fritz Ruf {vla}
Suzanne Lautenbacher {vla}
Oswald Uhl {gmb}
Herbert Schaefer {gmb}
Reinhold Johannes Buhl {vlc}
Manfred Graeger {db} &
Martin Galling {hpsi},
Marcel Couraud, conductor
Columbia ⊙ M2L 259 (ML 5352/3) [1959]
Columbia ⊙ M2S-605 [1959]
Wing ⊙ WL 1089 [1959]
Fontana ⊙ 697 101/2EL [196-]
Fontana ⊙ EFL 2513/4 [1961]
Philips ⊙ 611 100 [1964]
Philips ⊙ 839 000 [1964]
Fontana ⊙ 200 128/9 WGL [1965]
Fontana ⊙ 700 128/9 WGY [1965]
Philips ⊙ 836 817/8 (836 818) [1967]
Fontana ⊙ SFL 14031/2 [1970]
Philips ⊙ 6730 003 [1972]
Contour ⊙ CC 7535 [1981]
Contour 🖭 *CCT 7535 [1981]*

Members of Philomusica of London:
Cecil Aronowitz {vla}
Rosemary Green {vla}
Desmond Dupré {gmb}
Dietrich Kessler {gmb}
Bernard Richards {vlc}
Francis Baines {db} &
Thurston Dart {hpsi},
Thurston Dart, conductor
L'Oiseau-Lyre ⊙ OL 50159 [1959]
L'Oiseau-Lyre ⊙ SOL 60005 [1959]
Decca ⊙ SAWD 9902 [1959]
L'Oiseau-Lyre ⊙ DPA 577/8 [1977]
Pickwick ○ 29DUET CD [1990]
Pickwick 🖭 *29DUET [1990]*
Price-Less 🖭 *C 93557 [1990]*
Award 🖭 *AWC 8035 [199-]*

Members of Virtuosi of England:
Kenneth Essex {vla}
Alexander Taylor {vla}
Jennifer Ryan {gmb}
Oliver Brookes {gmb}
Joy Hall {vlc}
Terence Weill {vlc}
John Honeyman {db} &
Leslie Pearson {hpsi},
Arthur Davison, conductor
Vanguard ⊙ SRV-313/4 SD [1972]
Classics for Pleasure ⊙ CFP 40011 [1972]
Classics for Pleasure 🖭 *TC-CFP 40010 [1972]*
Classics for Pleasure 🖭 *CFPD 41448 [1972]*
EMI Music for Pleasure ○ CD-CFPSD 4769 [1995]

Members of Württembergisches Kammerorchester:
Ulrich Koch {vla}
Fritz Ruf {vla}
Johannes Koch {gmb}
Heinrich Haferland {gmb}
Peter Buck {vlc}
Siegfried Ihl {violone} &
Martin Galling {hpsi},
Jörg Faerber, conductor
Turnabout ⊙ TV 4044/5 (TV 4045) [1965]
Turnabout ⊙ TV 4045 [1965]
Turnabout ⊙ TVS 34044/5 (TVS 34045) [1965]
Turnabout ⊙ TVS 34045 [1965]
Turnabout 🖭 *KTVC 34044/5 (KTVC 34045) [1965]*
Intercord ⊙ 071-09 Z/1-2 [1972]
Intercord ⊙ 120.832 [1975]
Intercord 🖭 *420.832 [1975]*
Saphir ⊙ INT 185.801 [1976]
Mace ⊙ MAV 3600 [1977]
Saphir ○ INT 820.703 [1988]

Members of Prager Solisten:
{vla}
{vla}
{gmb}
{gmb}
{vlc} &
{ },
Eduard Fischer, conductor
Electrola ⊙ 1C 063 28261 [1970]

Members of Aston Magna Foundation for Music:
David Miller {vla}
Nancy Wilson {vla}
Fortunato Arico {gmb}
John Hsu {gmb}
Barbara Bogatin {vlc} &
Michael Willens {violone}
James Richman {hpsi},
Albert Fuller, conductor
[1977]
Smithsonian Collection ⊙ P3 14834 (P14837) [1978]

Members of New York Sinfonietta:
Max Gobermann {vla}
Betty Yokell {vla}
Sterling Hunkins {gmb}
Barbara Mueser {gmb}
Alexander Kouguell {vlc}
Julius Levine {db} &
Franz Rupp {hpsi},
Max Gobermann, conductor
Library of Recorded Masterpieces ⊙ BB 1-3 (BB 3) [1962]
Odyssey ⊙ 32 26 0013 (32 16 0187) [1968]
Odyssey ⊙ 32 26 0014 (32 16 0188) [1968]

Members of Musica Antiqua Köln:
Reinhard Goebel {vla}
Karlheinz Steeb {vla}
Christina Kyprianides {gmb}
Colette Harris {gmb}
Philipp Bosbach {vlc} &
Jonathan Cable {db} &
Thierry Maeder {hpsi},
Reinhard Goebel, conductor
[Feb. 1987]
Archiv ⊙ 423 116-1 [1987]
Archiv 🖭 *423 116-4 [1987]*
Archiv ○ 423 116-2 [1987]
Archiv ○ 431 702-2 [1991]
Archiv 🖭 *431 702-4 [1991]*
Archiv ○ 447 288-2 [1995]
Archiv ○ 459 361-2 [1998]
Deutsche Gramophon ○ 469 103 [2000]

Members of Nederlands Kamerorkest:
Szymon Goldberg {vla}
Margaret Major {vla}
Piet Lentz {gmb}
Hans Bols {gmb}
Bruno Schrecker {vlc}
Anthony Woodrow {db} &
Janny van Wering {hpsi},
Szymon Goldberg, conductor
[1958]
Philips ⊙ G 03019 L [1959]
Philips ⊙ GBL 5511/2 [1959]
Epic ⊙ BC 1044 [1959]
Epic ⊙ BSC 105 (BC 1044) [1962]
Epic ⊙ LC 3605 [1962]
Epic ⊙ SC 6032 (LC 3605) [1962]
Philips ⊙ PHC 2-004 (PHC 9027) [1966]
Fontana ⊙ 700 033/4 [1969]
Philips ⊙ 610 810 VL [ ]
Fontana ⊙ 894 015 [1971]
Philips ⊙ 838 610 VY [ ]
Philips 🖭 *7317 015 [1972]*
Philips ○ 438 507-2 [1993]
Philips ○ 464 355-2 [1999]

Members of Brandenburg Consort:
Roy Goodman {vla}
Judy Tarling {vla}
Mark Caudle {gmb}
Susanna Pell {gmb}
Angela East {vlc}
Cecilia Bruggemeyer {db}
Sally Jackson {bsn}
Nigel North {theorbo} &
Alastair Ross {hpsi},
Roy Goodman, conductor
[1991]
Hyperion ○ CDA 66612 [1992]
Hyperion ○ CDA 66711/2 (CDA 66712) [1993]
Hyperion ○ CDD 22001 [1996]

Members of Heidelberger Kammerorchester:
Werner Kloor {vlas – playback}
Margot Gutbrod {gmb}
Werner Jacksch {gmb}
Jürgen Wolf {vlc}
Folkert Rickers {db}
Hans Schmidt {hpsi},
Heinz Markus Göttsche, conductor
[21–22 Dec. 1966]
Sastruphon ⊙ 007 921/2 [1967]
Da Camera ⊙ SM 91921/2 [1967]
Bach ⊙ BACH 304 [1967]
Oryx ⊙ EXP 12/13 [1967]
Impromptu ⊙ SMI 91913/4 (91914) [1971]
Musical Heritage Society ⊙ MHS 1477/8 [1973]
Musical Heritage Society 🖭 *MHC 2063/4 [1973]*
Impromptu ⊙ 75 008 [2000]

A sample page from Strenkowski's Viola Music and Chamber Music with Viola, Recorded in the 20th Century *displaying recordings of Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 6*

New Music Reviews

by Andrew Braddock

***Perfect Storm*, for solo viola (2010)**
By Shulamit Ran (b. 1949)
Duration: 10'30"
Presser Premiere Series, Theodore Presser Company
$20.95

Shulamit Ran's *Perfect Storm* is a breathtaking and beautiful new work for solo viola that combines both wistful lyricism and dazzling virtuosity. Born in Israel, Ran has served on the faculty of the University of Chicago since 1973. In addition to receiving the Pulitzer Prize in 1991 for her Symphony, Ran is the recipient of numerous awards and honors from organizations such as the Rockefeller Fund, the Ford Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Guggenheim Foundation.

Perfect Storm was commissioned by violist Melia Watras and the University of Washington. According to an informative note in the score from the composer, Watras asked that the piece "allude to, or make use of, an existing work . . . from the viola repertoire," so that the two works could be performed side by side. In response to this request, Ran uses the opening viola melody from the first of Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs* as a source for musical material. Upon hearing Berio's name, many violists will first think of the physically and aurally demanding *Sequenza VI*; however, the first of his *Folk Songs* is cut from an entirely different cloth. The introductory viola solo drifts around a D-minor tonality and features mostly consonant double stops with open strings. In *Perfect Storm,* Ran borrows the distinctive sound and style from Berio's work without exactly quoting his material. Throughout the course of the opening section, Ran introduces Berio's music one bite-sized piece at a time. Under each successive reference she playfully writes either "*[. . . omaggio]* " or "*[. . . poco a poco omaggio]*," and the final and most complete reference is inscribed "*[. . . omaggio a Luciano Berio]*." By using this motive in a fragmented and liberal way, Ran chooses to enter into a creative musical dialogue with this pre-existing material instead of merely copying and pasting it into her work.

In this introductory section, Ran creates an open and relaxed sound-world, full of freedom and ease. She accomplishes this in part by combining modal-sounding harmonies devoid of leading tones with the frequent use of open strings to provide added resonance. Tender melodic fragments of no more than four or five notes are often punctuated by open-string pizzicati that serve to reinforce the open sound and provide timbral variety. This music has a meandering quality, and the composer seems more concerned with exploring the viola's luscious resonance instead of reaching a specific destination. Quickly ascending scalar passages often lead to nowhere and are immediately abandoned in favor of a ringing pizzicato or a Berio fragment. This absence of forced direction creates a wonderful sense of intrigue and exploration and serves as a perfect point of entry into this multifaceted work.

Immediately following the introduction's final "*omaggio a Luciano Berio*," the second section begins with "menacing" half-step grace notes in the viola's lowest register. A shocking major-seventh dissonance in the treble, borrowed from both this work's opening section and Berio's original, shatters the serene mood created in the beginning. The major seventh becomes a foundational interval for this part of the work and serves as a clear harmonic contrast to the consonant introduction. Despite the vast harmonic and dynamic differences between the first two sections, they are united by their shared quasi-improvisatory nature and metrical freedom.

After the first reappearance of the Berio motive—

here transposed up a fifth and harmonically altered—the music becomes more rhythmically structured and dance-like, with bar lines appearing for the first time. Centered in the viola's middle register, this section features double stops that almost always include an open string, recalling the resonance and openness of the beginning. Yet here, the pleasant-sounding major seconds from the opening are transformed into crunchy minor-second dissonances that provide agitated harmonic energy to the already propulsive rhythm. The rigid and precise metrical structure serves as a welcome contrast to the earlier improvisatory mood.

After two cadenza-like measures, the music shifts into a *moto perpetuo* section that is the most virtuosic and technically demanding passage of the work. Ran indicates for this part to be played "*almost 'fiddle'-style*," recalling Berio's instruction of "*like a wistful 'country dance fiddler'* " at the beginning of his song. These two styles, however, couldn't be more different: Berio's fiddler plays a relaxed and plaintive melody, while Ran's is in a rollicking speed contest. This section features scalar sixteenth notes in a variety of groupings (four, five, and six mostly) with complicated open-string staccato measures interrupting the scales. It concludes with high octave E's marked "*ferociously fast*," leaving both performer and audience breathless by the end.

The repeated E's provide a tonal bridge to the third and final appearance of the Berio motive, modally centered on E. Marked "*rich, with passion*," this final iteration of the motive bears the least resemblance to Berio's original. At this point, Ran has assimilated this fragment into her own musical language to the point that it is barely recognizable as originating from an outside source. The rapidly ascending scale fragments from the beginning are reintroduced in a repetitive and, as Ran states, "*obsessive*" sextuplet passage that gradually dissipates in energy and dynamics toward a *sul ponticello* tremolo on a low E-flat. Following this tremolo, a coda section reprises several of the melodic fragments from the beginning and is noticeably devoid of any clear references to the Berio motive. After a brief and sudden outburst of fluttering thirty-second notes, the work concludes with fragile artificial harmonics that disappear into the distance.
From the performing perspective, *Perfect Storm* is a technically and artistically demanding work but is by no means unattainable. It contains frequent high double stops and several fast passages that require great left-hand dexterity. In general, though, the piece is very idiomatically written for the viola. While subdivisions between adjacent beats can vary widely, Ran's rhythmic notation is incredibly precise and clear, eliminating the need for frustrating rhythmic deciphering. Its technical demands are somewhere around the level of Penderecki's *Cadenza.*

Perfect Storm is a remarkably deep and multifaceted work that, while paying homage to viola repertoire of the past, joins a select list of masterful works written for the viola in the twenty-first century. Ran's prodigious compositional talents give this work musical depth and meaning well beyond that of many contemporary viola works. This piece is as satisfying to study as it is to play, and it will find a welcome home in many violists' libraries.

***Shadows*, for viola and piano**
By Katherine Hoover (b. 1937)
Duration: 16'
Papagena Press
$17.95

Composer and flutist Katherine Hoover's *Shadows*, for viola and piano, is deeply influenced by the September 11 attacks. In the score, Hoover writes that she began composing the work in August 2001. Upon returning to it after the attacks, "The piece became darker," as "if a black cloud had settled over the island—a giant shadow." After shelving the piece for some years, the work was premiered in 2009 by violist Marka Gustavsson and pianist Lisa Moore.

Shadows consists of two movements to be performed without pause. After an initial outburst of dissonant double stops, the *Adagio* begins with eerily winding chromatic eighth notes in the piano, underneath fluttering thirty-second-note figurations in the viola. This is reminiscent of Bartók's "night music" style. The movement continues with several recitative-like

moments and includes some difficult upper-register arpeggiations that attest to the composer's flute background. At times, the piano writing in this movement can feel too sparse and almost incomplete.

Despite the title's gloomy connotations, the work's best moments occur in the frenzied and extroverted sections in the second movement. These parts are held together by a rhythmic ostinato and feature the viola and piano taking turns playing swirling thirty-second-note passages filled with wailing grace notes. The ostinato and grace-note figures evoke a mood very similar to that of the *Allegro ironico* movement from Bloch's Suite. This music also contains some of the most crunching dissonances of the work, including parallel major-seventh and tritone passages in the viola. Feelings of pain and destruction are palpable in these sections, and one can almost hear a cracking voice of mourning crying out.

To the modern violist, the vast majority of this work will present minimal technical challenges; however, several isolated passages, due to their range and awkwardness, will challenge all but the most advanced performers. In general, this work's evocative moods and raw expressions of pain make it a worthy and unique addition to a contemporary viola recital program.

***Fantasy Piece*, for viola and piano**
By Adolphus Hailstork (b. 1941)
Duration: 11'
Presser Premiere Series, Theodore Presser Company
$36.99

Adolphus Hailstork's *Fantasy Piece*, for viola and piano, is a postmodern virtuosic showpiece that moves through a wide variety of moods and places great technical demands on both performers. The first thing that one notices about this work is Hailstork's highly dissonant and chromatically saturated harmonic idiom. The final chord of the piece, for example, contains the following pitches: C, D, E-flat, E, F, G, G-sharp, and A. Also, the split-third chord (e.g., C, E-flat, E, G) plays an important role in this work, creating further chromatic richness. Despite this harmonic complexity, *Fantasy Piece* has a clear and straightforward meter, thankfully reducing many ensemble difficulties.

Throughout the course of this eleven-minute work, the music moves with ease among many different styles. The high drama of the beginning is contrasted with whimsical playfulness in the middle, and mysterious *adagio* passages appear unexpectedly. The *Allegro scherzando* section features an incredible and invigorating groove that will have the performers' and audience members' heads bobbing along with the beat. This section alone makes this piece well worth performing.

This work is very technically challenging, due in large part to its wide-ranging chromaticism. Sixteenth-note triplets are present in most measures of this work, and the viola's upper register is frequently employed. Although somewhat helpful for the pianist, the presence of key signatures in such a harmonically adventurous work will cause unnecessary note-reading difficulties.

Fantasy Piece is not for the faint of heart; but if one is prepared to overcome its technical challenges, this work will surely offer great rewards and serve as an impressive virtuosic spectacle.

Recording Reviews

by Carlos María Solare

New People—Daniel Powers: *The Rain Is Full of Ghosts*; Rob Deemer: *Erotica*; Michael Colgrass: *New People*; Jonathan Santore: *Front Porch Poems*; Graham Reynolds: *Jabberwocky*. Chiaroscuro Trio—Elizabeth Pétillot, contralto; Aurélien Pétillot, viola; Yuko Kato, piano. Albany TROY1425.

Even knowing, in theory, that the repertoire for voice, viola, and piano reaches much further than Brahms's *Zwei Gesänge*, op. 91, I was amazed at finding a list of over 150 items in the Chiaroscuro Trio's website. Their debut CD includes five of them, all by American composers and written—with one exception—in the twenty-first century. The odd man out is Michael Colgrass, represented by his song cycle *New People*, composed in 1969 to his own surrealistic texts. Colgrass's word-setting is highly expressive, and he gives the viola some crucial onomatopoetic solos to illustrate the text. Daniel Powers, a violist himself, makes the instrumental part duet with the voice on absolutely equal footing in his settings of three sonnets by Edna St. Vincent Millay, *The Rain Is Full of Ghosts*.

Of the two Chiaroscuro commissions, I was more taken by Graham Reynolds's ghoulish, but rousing, setting of Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky* than with Rob Deemer's *Erotica*, although the seedy saxophone impersonation in the latter is wickedly realized by Aurélien Pétillot. Finally, Jonathan Santore's *Front Porch Poems* brings together two short songs about rural New England—one of them evoking the world of the *Fairies on My Hilltop* with modally-tinged harmonies, the other a none-too-veiled homage to Schubert describing *A Winter Night*—and what should by rights become the ultimate party piece for any musicians performing in this particular combination: *Tango Violistico*. Which violist could possibly resist playing such sexily infectious music to the singer's running commentary about how wonderfully you do it ("The man plays the viola like a god!")?

The husband-and-wife team of Elizabeth and Aurélien Pétillot, with pianist Yuko Kato as their resourceful collaborator, makes an excellent case for all these songs. Elizabeth has an expressive mezzo-soprano voice. Her words are not always clearly understandable, but full texts are included in the booklet, along with short liner notes from each composer. Aurélien's dark viola sound matches his wife's phrasing beautifully, especially in the Powers songs, where they share the same melodic material. Elsewhere, he is consistently responsive to the songs' moods, modulating his tone with great expressivity. Hopefully the trio will work their way through that list in due time.

La Viola. Music for Viola and Piano by Women Composers of the 20th Century—Minna Keal: *Ballade in F Minor* ; Marcelle Soulage: Sonata for Solo Viola, op. 43; Fernande Decruck: Sonata for Viola and Piano; Luise Adolpha Le Beau: *Three Pieces for Viola and Piano*, op. 26; Pamela Harrison: Sonata for Viola and Piano, *Lament* ; Lillian Fuchs: *Sonata Pastorale* ; Rebecca Clarke: Sonata for Viola and Piano. Hillary Herndon, viola; Wei-Chun Bernadette Lo, piano. MSR Classics MS 1416 (2 CDs).

This is a most interesting compilation of viola music from the first half of the twentieth century (in Le Beau's case going back to 1881), an age that—as Hillary Herndon points out in her eloquent and informative liner notes—saw women composers coming into their own. Luise Adolpha Le Beau studied with some of the most respected teachers of her time (Joseph Rheinberger and Franz Lachner among them) and enjoyed some modest success in her native Germany. Her *Three Pieces* have a somehow dated charm but are very enjoyable, especially the rumbustious *Polonaise*.

Both Marcelle Soulage and Fernande Decruck studied in Paris and had long academic careers. Soulage's unaccompanied Sonata from 1930 is ideally tailored for the viola. Its idiomatic double and multiple stops, harmonic language, and general atmosphere remind one of Ysaÿe's violin sonatas. Decruck wrote her sonata for alto saxophone, providing a viola alternative (Herndon's wishful assertion that the piece might just have been "conceptualized for the viola" seems to be contradicted by some arpeggio writing typical of wind instruments, the complete

absence of double stops, and the dedication to the well-known saxophone player Marcel Mule). Although composed in 1943, the piece looks back to the *Belle Époque*, with some Ravelian harmonies and evocative titles for three of its four movements. Herndon is swift in *La Fileuse* (*The Spinning Wheel*), which takes the place of a scherzo, and haunting in the harmonics that open the final *Nocturne et Rondel*.

Lillian Fuchs's unaccompanied *Sonata Pastorale* from 1953 fits the viola like the proverbial glove, as could only be expected given its composer's pedigree as one of the finest American violists of her age. Herndon catches the music's improvisatory character convincingly and negotiates its many technical obstacles with complete aplomb, exhibiting a nicely bouncing spiccato in the work's concluding section. Minna Keal's *Ballade* was written in 1929, when the twenty-year-old composer was a student at the Royal Academy of Music, but only published over half a century later (I remember first hearing it at a viola festival organized by the late John White). This slightly overlong but melodious morsel would have won the approval of the Academy's viola teacher, the redoubtable Lionel Tertis. Pamela Harrison, who studied at the rival London institution, the Royal College of Music, wrote her Viola Sonata in 1946. Its four clear-cut movements are slightly reminiscent of her teacher Gordon Jacob, himself the composer of much beautiful and idiomatic viola music. As Herndon observes, Harrison's *Lament*, thematically related to the Sonata's *Andante affettuoso*, could have been conceived as part of the larger work.

This encyclopedic recital concludes with the one well-known piece, Rebecca Clarke's Sonata from 1919. One could wish for more of a sense of elfin impishness in the *Vivace*, but Herndon and her piano partner Wei-Chun Lo more than hold their own in a relatively crowded field. Indeed, their musical rapport throughout this fascinating program is cause for joy and gratitude. Herndon has also taken a hand in the recording's production, making sure that her vibrantly exciting tone is faithfully caught and well balanced with the often quite full piano parts. This well-planned, imaginative recital—two of them, actually—has been a pleasure to listen to, and it was obviously a labor of love by all concerned. I look forward to hearing much more from Hillary Herndon.

W. A. Mozart: Duos for Violin and Viola, K. 423 and 424; Benedikt Brydern: *Bebop for Beagles*, *From My Notebook Vol. 2*. Duo Renard—Mark Miller, violin; Ute Miller, viola. Fleur de Son Classics FDS 58011.

Mark and Ute Miller are, respectively, concertmaster and principal viola of the East Texas Symphony Orchestra. Both were trained in the United States and Germany, settling stateside after several years working in German orchestras. In this, their third CD together as Duo Renard, they alternate Mozart's two masterpieces for this instrumental combination with music by Benedikt Brydern. Since—to paraphrase Mark Miller's affectionate liner notes—if you are reading this, you probably already know all about the Mozart duos, I would like to share my discovery of Brydern's music. He is a German-born, LA-based composer and violinist—active in the classical, pop, jazz, and film-music scenes—who has an uncanny ability to conjure the sounds of a big-band from just a violin and a viola. For example, in *Bebop for Beagles* he writes a passage of triple-stopping for both instruments that effectively evokes a brass section in full blast. Brydern's instrumental writing makes few concessions to the players, requiring the greatest virtuosity and also the art that conceals art, since everything should sound—as it does in this performance—like it is improvised on the spot.

The Millers enter completely into the spirit of the music, and I am amazed how Ute's viola can sound like a sleazy saxophone when swinging some innocent-looking passages. The beagles, by the way, are the Millers' house pets, whose "unique lifestyle" between "utmost relaxation to frantic and playful moments" (Brydern) inspired this seven-movement suite. *From My Notebook Vol. 2* consists of four movements in a similar vein, although the *Impromptu* almost threw me with its not-quite-quotation from Verdi's *Aida*, underlined by the mildly "Oriental" hue of its main theme. In the Mozart G-major duo, the Millers exhibit some nicely flexible—and absolutely unanimous—phrasing in transitional passages. Appropriately, they give the B-flat duo a more monumental character, as befits a piece conceived on a larger scale and even including a slow introduction (I wish they had gone the whole hog and included the repeat of the movement's second half!). The truthful recording has a disconcertingly wide stereo spread, which is perhaps partly responsible for accentuating the timbric differences between Mark's violin and Ute's uncommonly dark-voiced viola. There is nothing here like the almost clone-like matching of, say, the

Oistrakhs' duo playing; rather a conscious contrasting of colors and characters.

Julius Harrison: Sonata in C Minor; Arthur Bliss: Sonata for Viola and Piano; Arthur Benjamin: Sonata for Viola and Piano. Patricia McCarty, viola; Eric Larsen, piano. Ashmont Music 1113.

Three weighty sonatas by as many British composers are included in Patricia McCarty's latest CD. That by Arthur Bliss, written in 1933 for Lionel Tertis, is deservedly gaining a toe-hold in the repertoire, and several excellent recordings have been issued in the past few years. McCarty's is up there with the best. She and Eric Larsen characterize the music with a sweeping gesture and are well on top of its virtuoso demands. Although technically really difficult, the viola part is idiomatically written (Bliss wrote later that Tertis's name should by rights appear on the score as "joint composer"), and McCarty seems to observe Tertis's fingerings and other markings, certainly in spirit if not necessarily in letter, adding to the overall impact of her interpretation.

Australian-born Arthur Benjamin wrote his Viola Sonata—alternatively known, after the titles of its movements, as *Elegy, Waltz and Toccata*—in 1942, while he stayed in Canada during the war, and dedicated it to William Primrose (there is also a later version with orchestra). The writing is, accordingly, brilliantly virtuosic, and Benjamin achieves an uncommon feeling of unity by transforming his main motifs for use in all the movements. Julius Harrison was an important conductor who worked with the likes of Arthur Nikisch and Sir Thomas Beecham. As a young man he studied composition with Granville Bantock in Birmingham, and he won an important prize at the age of twenty-three, but it was only when increasing hearing problems forced him to give up the baton in the 1940s that he devoted himself completely to composition. His Viola Sonata was written in 1945 for Jean Stewart (for whom Ralph Vaughan Williams wrote his viola-centric Second String Quartet at about the same time). The somber music surely reflects the troubled times in which it was conceived, but the first movement does bring forth a noble Elgarian melody, and the *Andante e cantabile sempre* has the viola chirping peacefully in an atmosphere redolent of Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending*. McCarty's nut-brown tone is wonderfully suited to this mostly melancholic music, and in close partnership with Eric Larsen she has produced benchmark readings of three important works from the mid-twentieth century.

Colori e Suoni del Novecento: *20th Century Music for Solo Viola*. Stravinsky: *Élégie*; Britten: *Elegy*; Hovhaness: *Chahagir*; Reger: Suite No. 1; Penderecki: *Cadenza*, *Sarabanda*; Hindemith: Sonata, op. 25, no. 1. Laura Menegozzo, viola. SSP 2013.

Colors and Sounds of the 20th Century is the title of this debut CD by the Neapolitan violist Laura Menegozzo, and color is very much to the fore in a recording that features some very beautiful playing and has a second protagonist in Menegozzo's instrument, a viola made in 1699 by Carlo Giuseppe Testore. There are some positively inebriating sounds to be heard here, covering the whole dynamic spectrum between veiled softness and a strong, but never shrieking, *fortissimo*. The disc's absolute highlight for me is Alan Hovhaness's prayer-like *Chahagir*, in which Menegozzo conjures up visions of a solitary litanist, whose each verse is repeated by the full congregation until an overwhelming climax is reached. Similarly, Penderecki's *Cadenza* builds up to a central highpoint before retreating again into silence, and Britten's early *Elegy* undulates its precociously expressive way through the viola's four strings.

In Reger's G-minor Suite, Menegozzo finds effectively contrasting sounds for the arpeggiated chords of the opening, the sharply articulated double stops of the scherzo-like second movement, the singing thirds of the third one, and the *perpetuum mobile* of the finale. She is obviously a sensualist of sound, a breed for which I have a very soft spot. On the minus side, I found her Hindemith rendition way too free in its rubato, in a way that doesn't make much sense and disconcerts the listener. Hindemith was very strict that the rhythm behind the rubato should always be recognizable! Also, Menegozzo slows down massively for the triplets in the *Sehr frisch und straff* to rather strange effect. Penderecki's *Sarabanda* similarly suffers from some mannered rubato, and in the Stravinsky *Élégie*, Menegozzo makes too much of the numerous commas in the score, to the detriment of melodic continuity. But then again, this is arguably a matter of personal taste, and I wouldn't wish anyone to miss out on Laura Menegozzo's—and her Testore's!—recording, which is technically first-rate.

Ad Index

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