



## **Tik-Yan Joyce Tseng, viola**

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts  
From the studio of Phillip Ying

*Tuesday, January 17, 2023*  
*Kilbourn Hall*  
*9:00 PM*

with Chun-Hsin Liu, piano

### *PROGRAM*

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|---|-----------------|
| <b>Viola Sonata in F minor, Op. 120 No. 1</b> | Johannes Brahms |
| I. Allegro appassionato                       | (1833-1897)     |
| II. Andante un poco adagio                    |                 |
| III. Allegretto grazioso                      |                 |
| IV. Vivace                                    |                 |

### *INTERMISSION*

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| <b>Shapes (a Viola Solo)</b>               | Marc Fanara    |
|  | (b. 1956)      |
| <b>Viola Sonata in F minor, Op.11 No.4</b> | Paul Hindemith |
| I. Fantasie                                | (1895-1963)    |
| II. Thema mit Variationen                  |                |
| III. Finale (mit Variationen)              |                |

## Brahms: Viola Sonata in F minor, Op. 120 No. 1

We owe this sonata to the interest that Brahms had in the clarinet near the end of his life as a result of hearing clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld, principal clarinet of the Meiningen court orchestra. The two sonatas for clarinet or viola that he published in 1895 as his Op. 120 are among the very last works published during his lifetime, revealing his last thoughts on the form of the classical sonata.

The *Sonata in F minor* is a darkly lyrical work that exploits the low range of the viola. In the course of its four movements, it moves from a mood of passionate yearning into steadily brighter emotional territory to end, exceptionally for a minor-key Brahms sonata, with a finale in the major mode.

We see the economy of Brahms' musical thought at the very beginning of the first movement. While the wide-ranging melody presented by the viola in bar 5 is the apparent main theme of the movement, it is the opening motive, the first four notes of the short piano introduction of bars 1-4, that dominates musical discussion from start to finish. This simple motive is still echoing in the ear at the end of the coda, marked *Sostenuto ed espressivo*.

The mood of calm reflection continues into the second movement, *Andante un poco adagio*. Apart from the opening *poco forte* there are only two more bars of *forte* in the entire movement, which is dominated by the markings *piano*, *dolce*, *espressivo* and *pianissimo*. Remarkable in this movement is the thinly textured piano part, a scoring that allows the viola to sing out melodically throughout. This is especially important when the opening melody is repeated later on in the lowest range of the instrument.

The *Allegretto grazioso* third movement sees Brahms at his most grandfatherly in an affectionate intermezzo that can't help but tip occasionally into a lilting Austrian *Ländler*. Even the darkish implications of its minor-mode middle section are lightened by the syncopated 'rain-drop' texture in the piano.

The bright mood so far established is given a firmer rhythmic base in the fourth movement, a rondo in the eye-brow-raising key of F major (for a sonata that began so seriously in F minor). The three bell-like repeated notes announced at its opening pop up everywhere in this exuberant finale, which is flecked by quicksilver changes of harmonic color and joyously chummy exchanges between the two instruments.

## Fanara: Shapes (a Viola Solo)

Shapes was originally written in 1988 for solo violin. It was inspired by the Scherzo from Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No.1 as well as the string quartets of Béla Bartók and the guitar solos of the Rock guitarist Steve Howe.

In 1989, the piece won a position within a collection of works presented at the Charles Ives Center for American Music in Danbury, Connecticut. Shortly after the end of the Cold War, the Charles Ives Center made an attempt to bridge the gap between the American and Russian people. Five composers from each country were invited to participate in a week-long celebration of artistic talent.

In 2022, Shapes was revised to suit the viola. It employs an eight-note synthetic scale and presents non-typical sound effects made possible by the stringed instrument. Specifically, the work serves to provide a piece by a living composer for the doctorate recital of Joyce Tseng.

## Hindemith: Viola Sonata in F minor, Op.11 No.4

It was in 1919 that Paul Hindemith changed from violin to viola, and in so doing produced two sonatas for the instrument: Op. 11 No.4 for viola and piano, and Op.11 No.5 for solo viola. Hindemith premiered these sonatas on June 2 at a concert where he played his new works for both viola and violin.

Op.11 No. 4 opens with a dreamy fantasy followed by a folk song-like theme with variations, and a finale with more transformations of that theme. The three movements are to be performed without a break. The sonata is warm and romantic, shows a strong French influence, and refutes those critics who consider Hindemith's music to be dry and academic. Hindemith's German tradition is particularly evident in the third movement's fugato section, which can be interpreted as a prophecy to the rise of Nazism, depicting it as a lame, ugly monster moving from hiding to power.