

**Three Dissertation Viola Recitals: British Miniatures, The Wartime Viola,  
and Transcriptions of Vadim Borisovsky**

**by**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts  
(Music: Performance)  
in the University of Michigan  
2017**

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## **DEDICATION**

*To all those who helped me persist,  
You're simply too many to list.  
I hope that you know  
I would name you below,  
But I worry that some might be missed!*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*I would like to acknowledge  
My committee members, without whom this would not have been possible;  
My professors, for their dedication, encouragement, and understanding;  
My family, for taking all my phone calls;  
My parents, who put me on this path;  
Caroline, for guiding me through the process;  
Maggie, who was with me through it all;  
Christine, for offering me sanity when I needed it most;  
And Catherine, who knows why.*

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## ABSTRACT

Three Dissertation Viola Recitals: British Miniatures, The Wartime Viola,  
and Transcriptions of Vadim Borisovsky

by

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Co-Chairs: Caroline Coade and Richard Aaron

Three viola recitals were given in lieu of a written dissertation.

The music in these recitals was chosen to demonstrate the growth of solo viola repertoire in the twentieth century, especially in Europe. The first recital, *British Miniatures for Viola*, included music from the modern English musical renaissance, when British composers sought to be free from foreign influences and create a truly British sound. Most of the pieces were commissioned by, or dedicated to, Lionel Tertis. A strong proponent for the viola, Tertis transcribed many pieces for the viola and urged composers to write for the instrument. The second recital, *The Wartime Viola*, focused on viola sonatas written near the end of the Second World War (1943-1946) by composers from western countries. This recital included the only American music, a short *Elegy* by Elliott Carter. The other three were sonatas by composers from England, France, and Italy. The final recital, *Transcriptions of Vadim Borisovsky*, featured all Russian music transcribed for viola(s) and piano. Borisovsky's work for the viola in Russia has rightly been compared to Lionel Tertis's work in England. He is considered the father of the Russian Viola School and credited with bringing the viola to a position of respect rather than indifference in Russia.

Tuesday, December 13, 7:30 p.m., Britton Recital Hall, The University of Michigan. Joshua Marzan, piano, Catherine Willey, cello, Celia van den Bogert, harp. Percy Grainger *Arrival Platform Humlet*; Percy Grainger “The Sussex Mummer’s Christmas Carol”; Rebecca Clarke *Passacaglia on an Old English Tune*; Rebecca Clarke *Two Pieces for Viola and Cello*, “Lullaby,” “Grotesque”; Ralph Vaughan Williams/Watson Forbes *Fantasia on “Greensleeves”*; Ralph Vaughan Williams *Suite for Viola and Orchestra*, Group 1, I. Prelude, II. Carol, III. Christmas Dance, Group 2, I. Ballad, II. Moto Perpetuo, Group 3, I. Musette, II. Polka Melancolique, III. Galop.

Friday, February 10, 7:30 p.m., Stamps Recital Hall, The University of Michigan. Joshua Marzan, piano. Elliott Carter *Elegy for Viola and Piano*; Lennox Berkeley *Viola Sonata in D minor*, I. Allegro ma non troppo, II. Adagio, III. Allegro; Darius Milhaud *Sonata No. 2 for Viola and Piano*, I. Champetre, II. Dramatique, III. Rude; Giovanni “Nino” Rota *Viola Sonata in C*, I. Allegretto Scorrevole, II. Andante Sostenuto, III. Allegro Scorrevole.

Saturday, April 15, 7:30 p.m., Watkins Lecture Hall, The University of Michigan. Joshua Marzan, piano, Rebekah Willey, viola. Pyotr Tchaikovsky/Vadim Borisovsky *Nocturne in D minor*; Modest Mussorgsky/Vadim Borisovsky “Hopak”; Sergei Prokofiev/Vadim Borisovsky *Excerpts from the Ballet Romeo and Juliet*, “Introduction,” “The Street Awakens,” “The Young Juliet,” “Minuet: Arrival of the Guests,” “Dance of the Knights,” “Mercutio,” “Balcony Scene,” “Carnival,” “Dance with Mandolins,” “Romeo and Juliet at Friar Lawrence’s,” “Death of Mercutio,” “Morning Serenade,” “Farewell Before Parting and Death of Juliet.”



# RECITAL 1 PROGRAM

## BRITISH MINIATURES FOR VIOLA

**Joshua Marzan, Piano**

- Arrival Platform Humlet** (1908) Percy Grainger  
(1882-1961)
- From *British Folk-Music Settings* (1911) Percy Grainger  
No. 17, "The Sussex Mummers' Christmas Carol" *trans. Kristina Willey*
- Passacaglia on an Old English Tune** (1941) Rebecca Clarke  
(1886-1979)
- Two Pieces for Viola and Cello** (1918) Rebecca Clarke  
Lullaby  
Grotesque  
Catherine Willey, cello
- Two Pieces for Viola and Piano** (1908) Frank Bridge  
Pensiero  
Allegro Appassionato  
(1879-1941)
- Fantasia on "Greensleeves"** (1928, 1947) Ralph Vaughan Williams  
(1872-1958)  
*arr. Watson Forbes*  
Celia van den Bogert, harp
- Suite for Viola and Orchestra** (1934) Ralph Vaughan Williams  
Group I  
I. Prelude  
II. Carol  
III. Christmas Dance  
Group II  
I. Ballad  
II. Moto Perpetuo  
Group III  
I. Musette  
II. Polka Melancolique  
III. Galop

## RECITAL 1 PROGRAM NOTES

### British Miniatures for Viola: Selections from the British Musical Renaissance

This recital explores the music that represents the true beginning of the viola's journey towards becoming recognized as a solo instrument. As the first violist virtuosi Lionel Tertis said, "It was pure generosity in those days at the beginning of the [19<sup>th</sup>] century to write for the solo viola. Publishers would not consider anything of the sort; to them it was a distinctly bad commercial proposition."<sup>1</sup> In fact, only two major works for the viola and orchestra were known at the time: Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*, and Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante*. So Tertis began to crusade for the viola. "From the beginning of my campaign to create a library of solo viola music, I begged for viola compositions from the younger English composers; and great is my debt to them. Such was their response that the British library of viola music looked like becoming the most extensive in the world; as a result, in course of time, foreign composers also became interested and wrote for the solo viola."<sup>2</sup> The pieces on this recital are the direct results of Tertis' efforts.



**Percy Aldrige Grainger**

Born July 8, 1882; Melbourne, Australia

Died February 20, 1961

Fig. 1.1

#### ***Arrival Platform Humlet* (1908)**

Percy Grainger is largely regarded as a British composer due to his collecting and arranging of folksongs from the British Isles. But Grainger was actually born in Australia and moved to Frankfurt at thirteen to study at the Hoch Conservatory. He soon moved to London, and then to the United States in 1914, and became an American citizen in 1918.<sup>3</sup>

Grainger's unique style is apparent in the *Arrival Platform Humlet*, an excellent example of his "fascinatingly original and attractive" approach to composition.<sup>4</sup> The title is a Graingerism in itself! In Grainger's own words:

"Awaiting arrival of belated train bringing one's sweetheart from foreign parts: great fun! The sort of thing one hums to oneself as an accompaniment to one's tramping feet as one happily, excitedly, paces up and down the arrival platform."<sup>5</sup>

So, a "humlet" is a little hummed tune. In this piece, the music is quite disjointed, moving from one bit of melody to another, much as one might expect from a humlet. Grainger says the piece was conceived for "middle-fiddle single" (i.e. viola solo) and expresses his gratitude to the great English violist, Lionel Tertis, for his editing of the music.

<sup>1</sup> Lionel Tertis, *My Viola and I* (London: Paul Elek, 1974), 33.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Malcolm Gillies and David Pear. "Grainger, Percy." *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Spicer, liner notes to *English Music for the Viola*, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Percy Grainger, *Arrival Platform Humlet*, (London: Schott & Co. Ltd., 1916, 1926), 1.

Also of note is Grainger's Maori inscription, "Mo te tau o te ate, mot e karearoto," *To the sweetheart, to the darling of one's heart*, certainly a nod to his Australasian upbringing.<sup>6</sup>

**"The Sussex Mummers' Christmas Carol" (1911)**

An excellent example of Grainger's arranging of folk tunes, this carol was first taken down by Lucy Broadwood, an avid collector and compiler of English tunes. A group of Sussex "tipteers," or mummers, sang the carol at the conclusion of their play, "St. George and the Turk."<sup>7</sup> It was then published in her collection, *English Traditional Songs and Carols*.

Grainger's original arrangement was for cello and piano, written "for my friend Herman Snadby," a Danish cellist who studied in Frankfurt as a contemporary to Grainger.<sup>8</sup> Though there is a recording for viola and piano, "personally sanctioned...by Grainger," I could not find that version in print, and so purchased the cello version and transcribed it myself.<sup>9</sup>

Grainger also writes, "Lovingly and reverently dedicated to the memory of Edvard Grieg," his devoted friend, who passed away in 1907.<sup>10</sup>

A copy of Lucy Broadwood's original published version and the complete verses follow:

Fig. 1.2

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Lucy Broadwood, *English Traditional Songs and Carols*, (London: Boosey & Co., 1908), 79.

<sup>8</sup> Percy Grainger, "The Sussex Mummers' Christmas Carol," (Boca Raton, Florida: Masters Music Publications Inc, 1992), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

1. When righteous Joseph wedded was  
Unto a virtuous maid;  
A glorious angel from Heaven came,  
Unto that virtuous maid.

3. O mortal man, remember well  
When Christ died on the rood;  
'Twas for our sing and wicked ways  
Christ shed His precious blood.

5. God bless the mistress of this house  
With gold all round her breast;  
Where e'er her body sleeps or wakes,  
Lord send her soul to rest.

7. God bless your house, your children too,  
Your cattle and your store;  
The Lord increase you day by day,  
And give you more, and more!

2. O mortal man, remember well  
When Christ our Lord was born,  
He was crucified betwixt two thieves  
And crowned with the thorn.

4. O mortal man, remember well  
When Christ was wrapt in clay,  
He was taken to a sepulcher  
Where no man ever lay.

6. God bless the master of this house  
With happiness beside;  
Where e'er his body rides or walks,  
Lord Jesus be his guide.



### Rebecca Clarke

Born August 27, 1886; Harrow, England

Died October 13, 1979; New York City

Fig. 1.3

#### *Passacaglia on an Old English Tune* (1941)

Rebecca Clarke was born and raised in England and studied violin at the Royal Academy of Music, and viola and composition at the Royal Conservatory of Music. She was the first female musician accepted into a fully-professional ensemble in 1912 when she joined the Queen's Hall Orchestra. She moved to the United States in the late 1930s, and settled in New York City. It was there that Clarke wrote the *Passacaglia* and dedicated it "to BB." This was a nickname for Clarke's niece Magdalen Madden, who later said she "never believed the sincerity of the dedication."<sup>11</sup> Liane Curtis, editor of *A Rebecca Clarke Reader*, surmises that,

"...it is possible that she labeled it with her niece's nickname as a decoy for other 'B's' that were resting heavily on her consciousness at the time: Frank Bridge [her friend and colleague who passed away on January 10, 1941]; her homeland, Britain; and Benjamin Britten, a symbol of the next generation of British composers and the future of British music—whatever that might be."<sup>12</sup>

Clarke's material for the *Passacaglia* comes from a tune attributed to Thomas Tallis, an Elizabethan composer of the Golden Age of England. The tune was made into a hymn, "Veni Creator," and was included in the *English Hymnal* of 1933 by its editor, Ralph Vaughan Williams.<sup>13</sup>

True to the passacaglia form Clarke keeps the hymn-tune as a ground bass throughout the piece, until the ending, when she follows the form of the hymn and finishes with the final phrase, played twice.

The modal and diatonic qualities of the piece set the *Passacaglia* apart from the

<sup>11</sup> Liane Curtis, "Rebecca Clarke and the British Musical Renaissance" in *A Rebecca Clarke Reader*, ed. Liane Curtis (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004), 35.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ralph Vaughan Williams, ed., *The English Hymnal* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 217.

impressionistic qualities of her better-known works.<sup>14</sup> The mode is C-Dorian, but because of the C-minor key signature, the sixth scale degree is frequently raised to A-natural. The piece also frequents the Phrygian mode, lowering the D to D-flat, and features frequent cross-relations, giving the piece an essence of antiquity.

The piano accompaniment ranges from supportive to leading, with rich harmonic shifts and steadily ascending lines. The final Picardy third gives the piece a dramatic and transcendental conclusion.

A copy of the hymn from the 1933 hymnal and verses follow:

Fig. 1.4

**153**

**VENI CREATOR. (L. M.)**  
*Slow* ♩ = 58. *Attributed to T. TALLIS, c. 1515-85.*

*Last two lines (to be sung in unison).*

Praise to thy e . ter - nal me-rit, Fa-ther, Son, and Ho - ly Spi-rit. A - men.

1. Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,  
 And lighten with celestial fire;  
 Thou the anointing Spirit art,  
 Who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart:

2. Thy blessed unction from above  
 Is comfort, life, and fire of love;  
 Enable with perpetual light  
 The dullness of our blinded sight:

<sup>14</sup> Liane Curits, program notes to Rebecca Clarke, "Passacaglia on an Old English Tune," accessed December 13, 2016, [http://www.hildegard.com/pdf\\_notes/494-02601\\_notes.pdf](http://www.hildegard.com/pdf_notes/494-02601_notes.pdf).

3. Anoint and cheer our soiled face  
With the abundance of thy grace:  
Keep far our foes, give peace at home;  
Where thou art guide no ill can come.

4. Teach us to know the Father, Son,  
And thee, of Both, to be but One;  
That through the ages all along  
This may be our endless song,  
Praise to thy eternal merit,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen. ✠

### ***Two Pieces for Viola and Cello* (1918)**

Clarke's duo for viola and cello was originally written to be played as a concert piece by the composer and her friend, May Murkle, and is set in two contrasting movements. The duo was a contemporary composition to Clarke's more famous *Viola Sonata* and uses much of the same impressionistic language, though on a smaller scale. The "Lullaby" begins with a very simple harmonic structure that gets more complex and the melody rises and falls, first in the viola line, then passed to the cello. Despite the apparent flow of the pieces, the technique needed to play the piece successfully is strict, with the viola moving to the upper ranges of the instrument, and the cello employing left hand *pizzicato* while bowing other notes.

The "Lullaby" is sharply contrasted next to the "Grotesque." While "grotesque" has come to generically mean, "unpleasant" or "monstrous," the meaning here would be closer to "fanciful" and "extreme," as both instruments are forced to play in ways that, for the period, were uncommon and awkward, including running harmonics, ricochet, and odd leaps and jumps by both the right and left hands. The movement is mischievous and playful and is quite fulfilling to play. ✠



### **Frank Bridge**

Born February 26, 1879; Brighton, England

Died January 10, 1941; Eastbourne, England

Fig. 1.5

### ***Two Pieces for Viola and Piano* (1908)**

Frank Bridge was a prominent musical figure in England during the early twentieth century, and was a violist himself, though the only completed works for viola and piano are these two pieces. Bridge is most known as the composition instructor to Benjamin Britten, the leading British composer of the mid-twentieth century. It is also likely that as Rebecca Clarke's friend and colleague, he gave her compositional instruction.

Though published in 1908, the two pieces here, "Pensiero" and "Allegro Appassionato," were written in 1905 and 1907, respectively. Much like the Clarke *Two Pieces*, the movements are sharply contrasted in color and mood. The "Pensiero" is somber and elegiac, reflective in nature, exploring the darker register of the viola. Bridge's use of cross rhythms also creates furtive feeling between the viola and piano, slowly gathering energy. In the center section, the viola moves upward in a plaintive line that climaxes and immediately returns to the low register.

The "Allegro Appassionato" is similar to the "Pensiero," as they are both in ternary form, but has a very different temperament. Where the first movement is dark and brooding, the second is bright and exuberant. While the viola soars above in the high register, the piano line runs up and down the keyboard in quick arpeggiated lines, giving the music a sense of fullness. While the outside sections are bright and joyful, the inner section is a little more contemplative, though

without losing any of the high spirits. The piece ends with the viola holding a high tonic and the piano quickly rushing through the final arpeggios to land on the final chord. ♪



### **Ralph Vaughan Williams**

Born October 12, 1872; Down Ampney, Gloucestershire

Died August 26, 1958; London, England

Fig. 1.6

#### ***Fantasia on “Greensleeves”* (1928/1947)**

Ralph Vaughan Williams was the preeminent English composer of the twentieth century. In many ways, his compositions set the standard for English nationalistic music. As R.A. Stradling says in his book, *The English Musical Renaissance*, Vaughan William’s music “English to its very marrow.”<sup>15</sup>

The old English tune “Greensleeves” was purportedly wirtten by King Henry VIII, but more likely originated during the Elizabethan era. The tune was included in Vaughan William’s 1929 opera, *Sir John in Love*, but the *Fantasia* was not published until 1934, the same year as the *Suite for Viola and Orchestra*.

The *Fantasia* is in ternary form, with the “Greensleeves” tune as the outer sections, and another English folk song, “Lovely Joan,” serves as the middle section.

This arrangement for viola and piano was done by Watson Forbes, a Scottish violist, in 1947, and I have chosen to perform it with harp rather than piano. ♪

#### ***Suite for Viola and Small Orchestra* (1934)**

Though Vaughan Williams was an avid collector of British folk tunes and songs, spending significant time busy in “field work,” surprisingly few folksongs appear in his works. Rather, he composes music that resembles the folksong idiom.

The *Suite* is a perfect example of this, for Vaughan Williams is able to capture the feel of each of the programmatic movements, without losing the essence of English song. Rather than titling this piece “Concerto,” Vaughan Williams picks the more apt title of “Suite,” reflecting the titles of the movements, many of which are reminiscent of dances common in England.

The *Suite* is in three Groups. **Group I** begins with the “Prelude,” a movement that is not far removed from those of the Bach suites. The viola arpeggiates over a slowly-moving bass line in the accompaniment, pushing higher and higher until it reaches the pinnacle and the accompaniment takes over while the viola sings above. This suite is often called the “Christmas Suite,” due to the titles of the second two movements (“Carol” and “Christmas Dance”), but the “Prelude” includes sections in 9/8, a time signature associated with pastoral and Christmas music; an early example would be Corelli’s *Christmas Concerto*. The movement ends with a climb up to the third of the tonic triad, a technique often used to evoke feelings of introduction, or transcendence, as opposed to the full closure of an authentic cadence (ending on the tonic).

The “Carol” is convincingly vocal and evokes a hymn tune by its pauses between lines. The movement even stood out to the critics:

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<sup>15</sup> R.A. Stradling, *The English Musical Renaissance: Construction and Deconstruction*, (London: Routledge, 1993), 139.

“...it is only the leisured simple things that were remembered. One of them came in the Carol, where the viola [on] a suite and simple tune, and the flute followed it about, a bar or so behind, with fleece as snow.”<sup>16</sup>

The meter alternates between 4/4 and 5/4, and the entire movement is quite lyrical.

The “Christmas Dance” has always conjured up images of Ebenezer Scrooge’s nephew, Fred, and the Christmas party in his house. It evokes fiddlers, singers, and good fun. The metric alterations between ¾ and 6/8, and subsequent polyrhythms, make the movement more exciting and somewhat treacherous to play.

**Group II** begins with the “Ballad,” a quiet, introspective movement. The opening is quiet and calm, with the viola waxing nostalgic. This serenity gives way to a folksy, more upbeat section that swells and falls quickly back into a darker mood with the viola’s quasi cadenzas. Vaughan Williams’s use of the pentatonic scale gives this movement its near-archaic mood.

The second movement of the group is the “Moto Perpetuo,” a fast, dizzying piece which swells and falls in continuous sixteenth notes. The frequent appearance of the minor second and its minor tonality make this movement quite ominous and its speed and leaps make it the most virtuosic selection of the *Suite*.

The “Musette” opens **Group III**, a slow, muted movement that conjures a feeling of inner peace, like a lullaby. The simple tune is played first by the viola, then taken up by the piano, and returns in the viola for the gentle ending.

Vaughan Williams has chosen to include a polka, but more specifically a “Polka Melancolique.” This movement is somewhat irreverent and at times quite raucous. Of note is the short cadenza near the end which recalls similar lines from *The Lark Ascending*, one of Vaughan Williams’s more famous and beloved pieces for violin and orchestra.

The final movement of the *Suite* is the “Galop,” a dance that predates the polka and is known for its speed and leaps. Images of horses, dancing, and general good times can be awakened throughout the movement. Its meter changes (from 2/4 to 6/8) give it a bouncing, fiddling feeling. ❄️

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<sup>16</sup> “London Concerts, Courtauld-Sargent Concert,” *Musical Times* 75:1102 (1934): 1128.



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## RECITAL 2 PROGRAM

### THE WARTIME VIOLA

**Joshua Marzan, piano**

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Elegy for Viola (Violoncello) and Piano</b> (1943, 1961)   | Elliott Carter<br>(1908-2012)       |
| <b>Sonata for Viola and Piano</b> (1945)<br>Allegro ma non troppo<br>Adagio<br>Allegro              | Lennox Berkeley<br>(1903-1989)      |
| <b>Sonata No. 2 for Viola and Piano</b> (1944)<br>Champetre<br>Dramatique<br>Rude                   | Darius Milhaud<br>(1892-1974)       |
| <b>Viola Sonata in C</b> (1945)<br>Allegretto Scorrevole<br>Andante Sostenuto<br>Allegro Scorrevole | Giovanni "Nino" Rota<br>(1911-1979) |

## RECITAL 2 PROGRAM NOTES

### The Wartime Viola: An Elegy and Three Sonatas Written 1943-1945

Descending from the violin to the viola, we cannot but be struck by the unassertiveness of this beautiful instrument. It is not often that one meets a viola player who adopts the career of virtuoso... Indifferently described as the alto or tenor, the viola is, of all stringed instruments, the one most readily mistaken for a human voice.<sup>1</sup> – C.L. Graves, 1904

This recital presents music written for the viola and piano during the years 1943-‘45. The composers hail from four different countries – America, England, France, and Italy. These pieces were chosen not only for their similarity in compositional era and formal structure, but for their striking differences. The *Elegy* is uniquely American, with sonorities that are rarely found outside the American idiom. Berkeley’s *Viola Sonata*, though vaguely French, still captures the English soundscape and is vastly different from the Milhaud *Sonata* which lies squarely in the realm of early French modernism. And finally, the Rota *Viola Sonata* is unlike any of the others, with its simple melodic lines and guileless counterpoint. Perhaps the objective of this recital is to answer the question, “Why, during this pivotal time in history, did these composers turn to the viola?”



**Elliott Cook Carter Jr.**

Born December 11, 1908; Manhattan, New York

Died November 5, 2012; New York City

Fig. 2.1

#### ***Elegy for Viola and Piano* (1943/1963)**

Elliot Carter is known today as the composer that synthesized “many of the ideas of European modernism (composers such as Claude Debussy, Béla Bartók, and Alban Berg) with those of the American ultra-modernists (Charles Ives, Henry Cowell, etc.).”<sup>2</sup> His most notable works are generally those written after his stylistic move away from neo-classicism in the late 1940s, music which falls into the genres described above. In his early career, he spurned the composers of the old world and struck out to find a more American sound. But then in the 1930s, Carter, like many of the American composers of the time, traveled to Paris to study with Nadia Boulanger. It was there that he finally found a connection with the music and composers that preceded him.<sup>3</sup>

The *Elegy* was composed during Carter’s effort to write in the populist manner. It has a “recognizably American ‘sound,’” echoing the musical language of his colleagues, Aaron Copland and Roy Harris.<sup>4</sup> Carter later disavowed much of his music from before and during the

<sup>1</sup> C.L. Graves, *The Diversions of a Music-Lover*, (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1904), 5.

<sup>2</sup> David Schiff, “Carter, Elliot,” *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 10, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2257467>.

<sup>3</sup> Felix Meyer, *Elliot Carter: A Centennial Portrait in Letters and Documents*, (Basel, Switzerland: Kreis Druck AG, 2008), 32.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Lowe, program notes to *Elegy for Viola and Piano*, “Seattle Chamber Music Society,” (Seattle, 2013.).

Second World War, but the *Elegy* survived, though it underwent several transformations. Originally written for cello and piano, Carter was dissatisfied with the result. But, rather than discarding it, in 1946 he wrote a second version for string quartet, and another in 1952 for string orchestra. While the orchestral version has a “depth and warmth of tone,” the piece itself calls for a more intimate style and was made perhaps a “bit too public.”<sup>5</sup> Finally, in 1963, Carter settled upon the viola and piano version. The final rendition differs somewhat from the previous versions; Carter brings it forward in time, but the style is still very traditional; “it is linear, lyrical in its mode of inspiration, and tonal.”<sup>6</sup>



**Sir Lennox Randal Francis Berkeley**

Born May 12, 1903; Oxford England

Died December 26, 1989; London

Fig. 2.2

### ***Viola Sonata in D minor* (1945)**

Lennox Berkeley, born to an aristocratic family of French descent, was fortunate in his connections. His interest in composition began at an early age. When Maurice Ravel visited London in 1925, Berkeley, who was twenty-two at the time, knew Ravel’s hosts and so was able to gain access to the admired composer. Berkeley showed him some scores and Ravel suggested Berkeley study with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, which he did.<sup>7</sup>

Though Berkeley was from the same generation as such English composers as William Walton and Michael Tippett, his music is less connected to the national traditions they, or earlier composers like Edward Elgar and Ralph Vaughan Williams, represent. This was perhaps “because of his French ancestry and temperament” which made his style closer to that of Fauré, Ravel, and Poulenc.<sup>8</sup> The latter two would become Berkeley’s personal friends.

The *Viola Sonata* was written during Berkeley’s mature period of composition. The first movement, “Allegro ma non troppo,” captures his idiom of overt melodic expression, rooted in tonality. His command of harmony is also evident in the interplay between viola and piano.

Berkeley’s extended acquaintance with Boulanger had a profound effect on him, and early on in his studies he became a Roman Catholic, like his pedagogue. This had a profound effect on his life and work. “Religious subjects in particular invariably gave rise to...music of unusual spiritual intensity, a mood also reflected in his instrumental slow movements.”<sup>9</sup> The second movement, “Adagio,” is a perfect example of Berkeley’s tendency to evoke a sense of religiosity. The music is reverent and climbs slowly to an intense climax before immediately reverting to the more solemn tone of the beginning.

The third movement, “Allegro,” is more upbeat than the previous movements. Here Lennox unabashedly uses the fluctuating rhythms of jazz, a practice enjoyed by many European composers of the time, and especially in France. The music is more light-hearted with humorous

<sup>5</sup> Blair Johnston. “Eliot Carter: *Elegy for String Orchestra*,” accessed February 10, 2017, <http://www.allmusic.com/composition/elegy-for-string-orchestra-mc0002358471>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Dickinson, *Berkeley and Friends*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2012), xiii.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Dickinson, “Berkeley, Sir Lennox,” *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 10, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/44828>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

lines passed between the piano and viola. Berkeley employs an unconventional ending, the viola and piano finishing on separate beats of the bar, rather than together, as if one player has anticipated the ending before the other. ♪



Fig. 2.3

### **Darius Milhaud**

Born September 4, 1892; Marseille, France

Died June 22, 1974 ; Geneva, Switzerland

#### ***Sonata No. 2 for Viola and Piano* (1944)**

It was 1940, after the fall of Paris, that Milhaud realized he needed to take his small family and leave France. “I had had too many contacts with German, Austrian, Czech, and Italian refugees not to have a good idea of what an occupation would mean.”<sup>10</sup> He also was made aware that his name was on the German’s list of wanted Jewish artists.<sup>11</sup> After arriving in New York, the family drove across the country to Mills College in Oakland California. There, Milhaud taught composition for several years, and composed the second viola sonata.

The first movement, “Champêtre,” or “Countryside,” is a pastoral movement set in 6/8 time. It conjures up images of the French or Californian landscape, and features wonderful interplay between the viola and piano. This jaunty movement even has a moment when the viola employs a series of false harmonics that sound just like a brief, whistled tune.

The second movement, “Dramatique,” is much more serious. Perhaps Milhaud was contemplating his homeland and the conditions there. The piano plays a persevering line of chords while the viola reminisces above. There is a feeling of unease and also nostalgia. Near the middle, the viola plays a new motif *sul ponticello*, at the bridge, which further heightens the anxiety of sound. This motif is repeated by the piano and later, after a brief recapitulation, provides an ending to the movement.

Milhaud had visited the U.S. earlier in the 1920s, and had been fascinated by jazz, as heard in his ballet *La Création du monde*.<sup>12</sup> This jazz idiom is heard again, in part, in the final movement of the *Sonata*, “Rude,” translated literally to “Rough.” The piece explores the extremes of the viola’s low and high ranges, set against the harsh, accented backdrop of the piano chords. Both instruments play hard and heavy, with the opening theme played by the viola, then later taken up by the piano in cannon, and finally finishing the piece. ♪



Fig. 2.4

### **Giovanni “Nino” Rota**

Born December 3, 1911; Milan, Italy

Died April 10, 1979; Rome, Italy

“When I’m at the piano, trying out music, I tend to be happy; but as a man, how can one be happy amidst the unhappiness of others? ... The feeling that animates my music is intended to ensure that those who hear it can have at least a moment of serenity.”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Darius Milhaud, *Notes without Music: An Autobiography*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), 273.

<sup>11</sup> Jeremy Drake, “Milhaud, Darius,” *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 10, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/18674>.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Richard Dyer, *Nino Rota: Music, Film, and Feeling*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 184.

### *Viola Sonata in C* (1945)

Nino Rota is best-known as a film composer. He composed music for 158 films, most notably *The Godfather I and II* (1972, 1974), and Franco Zeffirelli's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968).<sup>14</sup> But Rota composed for the concert hall as well; his output includes over eighty concert and chamber works, five ballet scores, and ten operas.

Rota was reared in a musically-fertile environment. As a child prodigy, Rota was referred to as the new Mozart or the Mozart of the twentieth century.<sup>15</sup> His immersion in music produced in him a facility of writing music. In his concert music, the melodies usually have no preparation, but begin straightaway.

The *Viola Sonata* fits this description. In the first movement, "Allegretto Scorrevole," briskly flowing, the melody is immediately introduced. The music is pleasant and pleasing to the ear. Perhaps it is jarring to think that Rota was writing this music near the end of a world war. But then Rota was unceasingly good-humored, and "avoided the overly sentimental."<sup>16</sup>

The second movement "Andante Sostenuto," has a more moody and introspective tone. There is the feeling that something intimate is being shared, and there is a slow, downward trajectory, seldom rising and always falling back. There are four main sections: a) the opening material b) a lighter, higher passage which leads into c) a bustling, anxious section followed by d) a recapitulation of the opening music.

The final movement, "Allegro Scorrevole," opens with a cheerful melody, moved by a "breezy, propellant energy."<sup>17</sup> This opening theme is repeated throughout the movement, interspersed with a more serious and low-pitched theme. After the line gradually rises in intensity, it fails to climax but instead returns to the opening material, though in a new key with the piano decorating in a series of triplets, split between the two hands. The music gradually slows to a retrospective mood before suddenly arriving at an *Animato* which drives the music to the end.

Rota's music has been described as "[communicating] immediately but...often not retained."<sup>18</sup> Rota himself once observed, "My music seems easy and quite a few people say that they have the impression of 'knowing it already;' but then, in the end, no one remembers a thing because the notes vanish before them."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

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## RECITAL 3 PROGRAM

### TRANSCRIPTIONS OF VADIM BORISOVSKY

**Joshua Marzan, piano**  
**Rebekah Willey, viola**

**Nocturne in D minor** (1873, *trans.* 1937)

Pyotr Tchaikovsky  
(1840-1893)  
*trans. Vadim Borisovsky*

**“Hopak”** from *The Fair at Sorochyntsi* (1866, *trans.* 1936)

Modest Mussorgsky  
(1839-1881)  
*trans. Vadim Borisovsky*

**Excerpts from Romeo and Juliet** (1935, *trans.* 1961/1977)

Introduction  
The Street Awakens  
The Young Juliet  
Minuet: Arrival of the Guests  
Dance of the Knights  
Mercutio  
Balcony Scene  
Carnival from “Dance of the 5 Couples”  
Dance with Mandolins (2 violas)  
Romeo and Juliet at Friar Lawrence’s  
Death of Mercutio  
Morning Serenade (2 violas)  
Farewell Before Parting & Death of Juliet

Sergei Prokofiev  
(1891-1953)  
*trans. Vadim Borisovsky*



## RECITAL 3 PROGRAM NOTES

### Transcriptions of Vadim Borisovsky: The Virtuoso Viola in Russia

The selections in this recital were chosen because they represent the response to a growing need for viola repertoire. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, composers were more apt to write music for the solo viola, but the catalog was growing slowly. Violist Vadim Borisovsky sought to fill the ever-widening gap with transcriptions. Not only did this borrowed repertoire give violists access to more music, but it also furthered the capabilities of the players, allowing them to try out their virtuosic skills in a manner less stilted than simply playing a violin piece a musical fifth lower. Because of Borisovsky's relative isolation in Russia, he found himself unaided in his endeavor to widen the viola repertoire. Nevertheless, the results of his industry are truly rewarding.



**Vadim Vasilyevich Borisovsky**

Born January 19, 1900; Moscow, Russia

Died August 2, 1972; Moscow, Russia

*Fig. 3.1*

It is an unfortunate truth that little of Vadim Borisovsky's biography has survived, or is, at least, possible to locate. Though researcher Dr. Viktor Iuzefovich published a book on Borisovsky in Moscow (1977), the book is limited as it suffered severe censorship to comply with state ideology.<sup>1</sup>

Borisovsky entered the Moscow Conservatory as a violinist in 1917. Here he was first introduced to the viola in a chamber music setting, and so enjoyed it that within a year, he had dedicated himself to the viola, despite warnings: "Only retired generals and brassless musicians play viola."<sup>2</sup> But Borisovsky persevered, studying with Vladimir Bakaleinikov as the only viola student at the Conservatory.

In 1922, Borisovsky graduated with distinction, and he and three colleagues formed the Beethoven State Quartet, which eventually had a repertoire of over 600 works with more than 200 recorded.<sup>3</sup> He was the violist of the Beethoven Quartet until 1963 when a heart attack halted his viola playing.<sup>4</sup> Though he remained a chamber musician throughout his musical career, Borisovsky soon entered the solo arena, a surprising choice as the viola was not well-respected and lacked the repertoire base of the violin.

In September 1925, he was offered a teaching position at the Moscow Conservatory where he would replace Bakaleinikov. Despite his professional accomplishments, he was still

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<sup>1</sup> Elena Artamonova, "Vadim Borisovsky and His Viola Arrangements: Recent Discoveries in Russian Archives and Libraries, Part 1," *Journal of the American Viola Society* 12/3 (1996): 30.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Wright, "Vadim Borisovsky and the founding of the Russian Viola School," accessed April 14, 2017, <http://humanities.byu.edu/vadim-borisovsky-and-the-founding-of-the-russian-viola-school/>.

<sup>3</sup> David Milsom, "Vadim Borisovsky," Naxos.com, accessed April 14, 2017, [http://www.naxos.com/person/Vadim\\_Borisovsky/21674.htm](http://www.naxos.com/person/Vadim_Borisovsky/21674.htm)

<sup>4</sup> Elena Artamonova, "Vadim Borisovsky," 33.

dismissed at least twice from the Conservatory during the careful *chistki* (“cleansing,” purges) common of the time. The Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians, or RAPM, judged musicians by social origins revolutionary values, and even choice of instrument.<sup>5</sup> In 1931, Borisovsky was forced to resign from his post and all his students compelled to the violin course, though his students secretly continued their studies at Borisovsky’s home. This decision of the RAPM was due to the view that “viola was an instrument that overloaded the educational programmes.”<sup>6</sup>

Borisovsky was an advocate for the viola in Russia, much like Lionel Tertis in England. His concert career was lengthy and widely-acclaimed, and he was admired by composers and performers alike. Throughout Borisovsky’s life, he believed his duties to the viola were as follows: a) to foster the next generation of violists, b) to ensure that new and better violas were built, and c) to produce new material for the violist.<sup>7</sup> He succeeded in all these areas: a) he is rightly considered the founder of the Russian Viola School, b) 183 new violas were made in his lifetime by Russian luthiers (a large number when compared to previous production), and c) he produced over 200 transcriptions for the viola.<sup>8</sup>

Borisovsky’s influence was little felt outside of Russia, because his travel was restricted by the government. He gave only one concert tour (1927) outside of Russia, in Germany.<sup>9</sup> Still, Borisovsky was in correspondence with his viola colleagues in Europe, and performed many viola pieces written by then-living composers. His transcriptions and arrangements span repertoire from the Baroque to his contemporaries, with an understandable emphasis on Russian composers. These pieces did much to expand the viola repertoire and introduced new standards of playing in viola performance.<sup>10</sup>

The genius of Borisovsky’s transcriptions is how he transforms a work to match the viola idiom. In fact, these transcriptions were so admired that they were often mistaken for originals; people assumed (and often still do) the composer intended Borisovsky’s instrumentation. ❌



**Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky**

Born May 7, 1840; Votinsk, Russia

Died October 6, 1893; St. Petersburg, Russia

Fig. 3.2

### ***Nocturne in D minor* (1873/1937)**

The *Nocturne* was originally written as a piano piece, one of a set of six commissioned by the publisher Pyotr Jurgenson.<sup>11</sup> The manuscript is dated 1873, and in 1888, Tchaikovsky arranged the piece for cello and small orchestra for Anatoly Brandukov.<sup>12</sup>

In 1937, Borisovsky transcribed the piece for viola and piano, and it is a true transcription, with only a few notes added to the viola flourish before the return of the opening

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Samuel Wright, “Vadim Borisovsky.”

<sup>8</sup> Elena Artamonova, “Vadim Borisovsky,” 33.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>11</sup> Tchaikovsky-Research.net, [http://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/Six\\_Pieces,\\_Op.\\_19#cite\\_note-note2-2](http://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/Six_Pieces,_Op._19#cite_note-note2-2)

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

theme. The music is haunting and frank in its presentation. In ternary form (ABA), the return of the A section is transformed by listening to the more hopeful B section. While the first A section was simple and guileless, the return is wrought with faster-moving notes in the viola line, creating an insistent prodding that only ceases in the short coda.

Many of Borisovsky's transcriptions require the performer to be somewhat virtuosic, but this transcription stays true to the original sincere melody, with only a few bars where the violist must shift to the upper positions, and there, tenderly. 🎻



### **Modest Mussorgsky**

Born March 21, 1839; Toropets, Russia

Died March 28, 1881; St. Petersburg, Russia

Fig. 3.3

### **“Hopak” from *The Fair at Sorochyntsi* (1866/1936)**

Mussorgsky's “Hopak,” the closing movement of Act One of his opera, *The Fair at Sorochyntsi* (1866), was an endeavor to write in a specifically Russian style: the Ukrainian folk dance a *gopak*. It was the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and European countries' nationalistic tendencies were in full swing. Judging by Mussorgsky's plan, drawn up in 1877, the opera was only half complete when Mussorgsky died.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the opera already contained fourteen verifiable Russian folk tunes, quite a feat at the time.

Borisovsky's 1937 transcription has given the piece a decidedly virtuosic bent, complete with running octaves left-hand *pizzicato*, and 11<sup>th</sup>-position harmonics. The viola and piano work together to create the energy essential to this familiar and delightful piece. 🎻



### **Sergei Prokofiev**

Born April 27, 1891; Sontsovka, Ukraine

Died March 5, 1953; Moscow, Russia

Fig. 3.4

### ***Romeo and Juliet* (1935/1961/1977)**

Sergei Prokofiev's style of writing music is exclusive to himself, and his music has remained a favorite choice for orchestras and audiences. As scholar Richard Taruskin said, Prokofiev had a “gift, virtually unparalleled among 20<sup>th</sup>-century composers, for writing distinctively original diatonic melodies.”<sup>14</sup>

While Prokofiev was a “modern” composer, his music is highly diatonic.<sup>15</sup> As Neil Minturn writes, “The classical line is strongly represented by Prokofiev's firm attachment to tradition even when he was striving to compose original and modern pieces.”<sup>16</sup> Though always striving for originality, Prokofiev saw “classical” as a stamp of approval, “a sanctioning by tradition.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Richard Taruskin, *Mussorgsky: Eight Essays and an Epilogue*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 331.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Taruskin, “Prokofiev, Sergei,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, (Oxford, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Niel Minturn, *The Music of Sergei Prokofiev*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Yale University Press, 1997), 28.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Prokofiev has given us some of his finest compositions. The movements range from complex to simple, and many of the melodies are repeated again and again (though transposed), not uncommon for a staged performance.

Borisovsky has taken the music and made it his own. Frequently the melody appears in the viola line while the piano is left to take the bulk of the orchestral parts. Other times, the melody belongs in the piano while the viola provides color and rhythmic interest. The transcriptions employ a host of techniques, most notably the large quantity of harmonics, both false and natural, in the viola lines.

Remarkably, the transcriptions feel complete and natural. It was Borisovsky's talent to fully employ the viola and piano techniques to recreate the full orchestra experience. With careful listening, one can identify trumpets, trombones, flutes, piccolos, and even drums, all incorporated into the viola(s) and piano lines. 🎻

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