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## Senior Recital: Miriam Albin, viola

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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SENIOR RECITAL

Miriam Albin, viola

assisted by

Hope Armstrong Erb, piano



MARCH 21, 1999, 3:00 PM  
PERKINSON RECITAL HALL

Is it not strange that sheep's guts  
should hale souls out of men's bodies?  
-William Shakespeare

• • • PROGRAM • • •

Sonata for Viola and Piano, op. 147

Moderato  
Allegretto  
Adagio

Dmitri Shostakovich  
(1906-1975)

Six Studies in English Folksong

I. "Lovely on the Water"  
("The Springtime of the Year"): Adagio

II. "Spurn Point": Andante sostenuto

III. "Van Dieman's Land": Larghetto

IV. "She Borrowed Some of Her Mother's Gold": Lento

V. "The Lady and the Dragoon": Andante tranquillo

VI. "As I walked over London Bridge": Allegro vivace

Ralph Vaughan Williams

(1872-1958)

• • • INTERMISSION • • •

Sonata for Viola and Piano, op. 11, no. 4

Fantasia  
Thema mit Variationen - attacca  
Finale (mit Variationen) - attacca

Paul Hindemith  
(1895-1963)

## Dmitri Shostakovich

Shostakovich is probably best known for his gargantuan symphonies. He belonged to the first generation of Russian composers educated completely under the Soviet system. Shostakovich's music, like Hindemith's, was rooted in tradition, but he reserved the right to use dissonance and atonality at will. (As a matter of interest, Shostakovich heard Hindemith's music when Hindemith traveled to Leningrad.) Shostakovich somehow managed to remain true both to his art and to his government throughout the many ideological eras during which he lived. There were times when his music fell into disfavor with the current ideology. For example, the Communist Party resolution of 1948 accused him and other artists of engaging in "formalistic distortions and antidemocratic tendencies alien to the Soviet people" and perpetuating a "cult of atonality, dissonance, and discord." At times like this, Shostakovich changed his musical language to improve his reputation in the eyes of the government. What attests to Shostakovich's great skill is that even when changing his musical language for ideological reasons, he still produced viable works of substantial artistic merit, for which he is still remembered and admired.

Shostakovich was a man of compassion as well as a man of loyalty. In his memoirs he states:

I feel eternal pain for those killed by Hitler, but I feel no less pain for those killed on Stalin's orders. I suffer for everyone who was tortured, shot, or starved to death. There were millions of them in our country before the war with Hitler began.

We feel some of this compassion in the Sonata for Viola and Piano, which was composed in the last year of Shostakovich's life. There are moments, especially in the final movement, when the piano drops out and the viola is left alone like a voice crying out. Throughout the entire piece the piano line is fairly sparse, creating a feeling of loneliness and emptiness. The piece is beautifully balanced by a scherzo-like dance movement in the middle between the outer more somber and serious movements. Shostakovich gives many interesting musical instructions in this piece for effects such as *pizzicato* (plucking), *con sordino* (with mute) and *sul ponticello tremolo* (playing very fast repeated notes very close to the bridge of the viola). As unsettling, dissonant, or atonal as his musical language may be, there is a certain narrative to listen for. Listen also for Shostakovich's quotation of Beethoven's "Moonlight" piano sonata throughout the final movement.

## Ralph Vaughan Williams

Vaughan Williams has a number of claims to fame: first, he was related to Charles Darwin on his mother's side; secondly, he played the viola. Like Hindemith and Shostakovich, he served in WWI. But most important was his rescue of the future of English music.

For years the English had been in the midst of musical drought. Vaughan Williams appeared on the English music scene at a time when his native land was in dire need of a new musical identity. Vaughan Williams created this identity by incorporating native folk songs into his musical language. The characteristics and the tunes of folk songs can be found even in many of his "serious" classical works. He was well-trained in classical music: he studied composition with Max Bruch in Berlin

in 1897 and with Maurice Ravel in Paris in 1908 as well as at Charterhouse, Cambridge, and the Royal College of Music. In the sense that he never forgot that music belonged to the people, he can be compared to Bartók and Kodály in Hungary, who also were pioneer folksong collectors. From 1903 to 1913 Vaughan Williams collected over 800 folksongs and variants, mostly in Norfolk, Essex, and Sussex. Since folksongs are so much an oral tradition, most of Vaughan Williams' collecting was done "in the field," so to speak, by traveling to villages and towns and asking old-timers to sing the songs they knew while he notated the melodies. His view on his endeavors in creating a "national music" was such: "Art, like charity, should begin at home. If it is to be of any value it must grow out of the very life of [the artist], the community in which he lives, the nation to which he belongs." The musical language which Vaughan Williams founded affected the future of English music for years to come, even into the years of the progressive rock movement with groups such as Yes and Genesis.

*Six Studies in English Folksong*, originally written for violoncello and piano, was first performed in London in 1926. It is a collection of one of Vaughan Williams' many arrangements of folksongs. There is not much more to say about this piece whose beauty lies in its simplicity: it speaks for itself.

#### *Paul Hindemith*

I first "met" Hindemith when I was a high school student learning one of his unaccompanied viola sonatas. During my freshman year of college, I was reintroduced to him in a different capacity, as the author of one of the main music theory texts. Throughout his life, Hindemith was a dedicated and demanding teacher of music theory and

composition, teaching at many fine institutions in both Europe and the U.S. During his 12 years of teaching at Yale, he awarded only 12 master's degrees in composition.

Hindemith is known also as an accomplished performer on the viola. He played many other instruments as well and wrote at least one sonata for every orchestral instrument during the course of his compositional career. When the Nazis first came to power, they left Hindemith in peace even though certain members of the musical press had been accusing him of not living up to his responsibility as a composer for the German people. In 1934, however, the Kulturgemeinde announced a boycott on the performance of Hindemith's music, and later that year Goebbels made a personal attack on him at a Nazi rally. Despite the fact that Hindemith had official permission to continue teaching, touring abroad, and having his music published, he chose to leave Germany in 1936 and eventually came to the U.S. by way of Switzerland. He later returned to Switzerland for the last ten years of his life.

Unlike Shostakovich, Hindemith made his reputation as a composer with his chamber music rather than with large orchestral works. Opus 11, no. 4 was composed in 1919 during the period when he was experimenting with a variety of styles. This sonata exhibits the lyrical style of the Romantic era. The piano and viola accompany one another, and both parts are quite complex. The three movements are played without pause, but structural points in the music help to signify the beginning of each movement. The first movement is very short; the second movement is variations on a folksong melody; and the third movement contrasts a loud extroverted theme with a flowing, lyrical, more personal melody. The piece ends with great drama.

GEORGE M. MODLIN CENTER FOR THE ARTS  
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

*Admission is free of charge unless otherwise indicated*

**Los Tangueros**

**with Pablo Ziegler, piano, and Christopher O'Riley, piano**

Wednesday, March 22, 1999, 8 pm

Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music

American pianist Christopher O'Riley teams with Argentine pianist Pablo Ziegler in *Los Tangueros*, a program of classic Piazzolla tangos in two-piano arrangements by Mr. Ziegler, composer's longtime pianist.

Adults \$14, Sr. Citizens \$12, Faculty/Staff \$10, UR Student \$5

Call 289-8980 for tickets.

**Philadanco**

Friday, March 26, 1998, 8 pm

Saturday, March 27, 1998, 8 pm

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*Student Recital*

**Dana Rajczewski, trumpet**

March 27, 1999, 8 pm

Perkinson Recital Hall

**Ian Bostridge, tenor**

Wednesday, March 31, 1999, 8 pm

Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music

Sponsored, in part, by the University of Richmond Cultural Affairs Committee

The 1998-99 Great Performances Season concludes with what is sure to be one of the most exciting concerts of the season featuring the brilliant young tenor from England, Ian Bostridge. In the few years since his 1993 professional debut, Ian Bostridge has attracted some of the finest concert and recital reviews of any singer at any time in any age. Esquire magazine claims that "everyone's mad for tenor Ian Bostridge"-we guarantee that you will be, too!

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