

VIOLA VIOLA

GROUND SWELL (2007) (25:05)

solo viola and ensemble

Steven Mackey

(b. 1956)

- 1 I. Approach by Sea (1:26)
- 2 II. The Fertile Hillside (4:47)
- 3 III. Thin Air (4:01)
- 4 IV. Peak Experience (4:32)
- 5 V. Over the Top (1:19)
- 6 VI. Running Downhill (3:19)
- 7 VII. Sailing Away (5:37)

Hsin-Yun Huang, viola

American Modern Ensemble

Sarah Schram, oboe; Benjamin Fingland, clarinets

Annie Amis, horn; Robin Zeh, Victoria Paterson, violins

Philip Payton, viola; Laura Bontrager cello;

Stephen Gosling, piano

Steven Mackey, conductor

ROMANCES (2011) (10:43)

viola and piano

Poul Ruders

(b. 1949)

- 8 I. Portal (1:20)
- 9 II. Even Song (2:58)

- 10 III. Rhapsody (0:52)
- 11 IV. Ballad (1:42)
- 12 V. Dirge (2:41)
- 13 VI. Duet (1:08)

Hsin-Yun Huang, viola

Sarah Rothenberg, piano

14 VIOLA, VIOLA (1996) (10:51)

two violas

George Benjamin

(b. 1960)

Misha Amory, viola 1

Hsin-Yun Huang, viola 2

15 FIGMENT IV (2004) (3:05)

viola solo

Elliott Carter

(b. 1908)

Hsin-Yun Huang, viola

16 REMEMBRANCE (2005) (10:27)

viola and orchestra

Shih-Hui Chen

(b. 1962)

Hsin-Yun Huang, viola

Evergreen Symphony Orchestra

Gernot Schmalfuss, conductor

It is my belief that while we musicians have the privilege to explore art forms of profound beauty, we also have a responsibility to the world's ongoing creative process. Ever since the first time I heard Haydn's "Sunrise" Quartet, I dreamed of a life in chamber music. In my mind, the viola in a chamber ensemble represents the most human figure: a voice that does not intend to be flashy or self-centered, but is rather the diplomatic glue that holds everyone together. It shines subtly and its unique timbre is unforgettable. Being a violist in a chamber music context is almost a philosophical way of life and a state of mind.

This CD is the brainchild of many projects and initiatives, and thus provides an opportunity for its listeners to enjoy the viola in a variety of contexts, each with its own texture and harmonic language. While I was a member of the Borromeo Quartet, the group had a longstanding working relationship with composer Steven Mackey. I love his music for its fun and its unassuming brilliance. *Ground Swell* was a piece that was inspired by his honeymoon trip to Italy. All 7 movements connect seamlessly as to suggest a journey; the trajectory of the piece evokes the act of hiking up a mountain, then running back down. One can hear clear musical imitations

of specific sounds from this trip: the honking horns of the Vespa scooters; Italian radio talk (as it might sound to a foreigner who doesn't understand the language); footsteps running down a steep slope; gentle waves of the sea; and so on. The central, fourth movement, "Thin Air", captures that certain stillness one experiences only at the peak of a mountain. It is reflective and quietly austere, in stark contrast to the work's outer sections. The work is scored for solo viola and an ensemble consisting of oboe, clarinet (doubling bass clarinet), horn, string quartet and piano.

Romances by Danish composer Poul Ruders is a new work written

specifically for this recording. This set of six rather delicate movements is light, whimsical and transparent. The listener is almost left begging for more. Ruders writes that: "In several European languages, the word for a novel, i.e. an unfolding drama in writing, is 'roman', and although there's nothing literary about my six *Romances*, each piece tells its own story open to individual interpretation."

British composer George Benjamin was featured in a Carnegie Hall "Perspectives" workshop in 2007. One of the pieces programmed on his concerts was *Viola, Viola*, a piece commissioned for the opening of a new concert hall in Tokyo. It was

written for violists Nobuko Imai and Yuri Bashmet in 1997. I had the pleasure of working on the piece with my husband Misha Amory, violist of the Brentano String Quartet, a player who has inspired me in life. *Viola, Viola* presents a case where the viola is definitely not just a middle voice. Rather, the composer appears to challenge the performers to repudiate this stereotype utterly. The two parts are absolutely equal in terms of their technical demands. The short, 9-minute piece has an incredibly exciting rhythmic drive throughout. Mr. Benjamin constructs an aural world that is so full you can feel it bursting at the seams, ranging from tension-filled triple pianissimos to bombastic forceful triple fortissimos.

Figment IV by Elliott Carter, is a pithy and exciting movement that was a surprise gift for my former teacher, Samuel Rhodes of the Juilliard String Quartet. I was truly honored to have had the chance of learning, performing and recording the piece in celebration of Mr. Carter's 100th birthday. This short solo composition starts with a rather firm statement of just two notes, an E-flat and a D-natural forming a major seventh. This interval begs to be resolved to an octave; the tension that results throughout the composition amounts to an ever-redefined question mark. The end of the composition shows that this question mark will

remain unanswered. It is even more emphatic than the opening, giving the listeners no doubt of its definition and intention.

Last but not least is *Remembrance* – a work written by Taiwanese composer Shih-Hui Chen. It was a small experiment on my part to ask for two versions of the same piece, one with orchestra (heard here) and one with chamber ensemble. Shih-Hui Chen has an unmistakable and unique voice. This piece captures the essence of nostalgia from a popular folk melody and reminds me of the old-world grandeur of a Chinese opera.

Each of these pieces highlights the viola in different combinations and contexts. The viola is no longer an instrument 'in the background'. It has developed a repertoire and world of its own, which celebrates the instrument for what it is. Not a bigger violin, not a smaller cello, but an instrument that has its own distinct voice.

Notes by Hsin-Yun Huang



我相信,身為音樂家的我們,不僅有幸能探索深具美感的藝術形式,同時也有責參與世界各地正在進行的創作過程。初次聽到海頓的《日出》四重奏(Sunrise)後,我便夢想加入室內音樂的世界。在我心中,室內樂的中提琴最能代表人性:其樂音不俗豔也不搶鋒頭,卻能巧妙地讓各聲部合為一體。中提琴散發著微妙的氣息,獨特的音色更是令人難忘。在室內樂中擔任中提琴手,幾乎可說有如一種人生處世哲學,也是一種心境。

這張(CD)是許多計畫及創新想法之下的產物,因此讓聽眾有機會能欣賞到各種不同的音樂意境,而每一種都有其獨特的結構及和聲語言。第一首是台灣作曲家陳士惠的《思想起中提琴協奏曲》。我進行了小小的實驗,將同一首曲子錄製兩種版本,一是搭配管弦樂團,另一版本則是搭配室內樂團。這裡所聽到的是管弦樂團的版本。作曲者陳士惠也是台灣人,她的作品具有無法錯認的獨特樂音。這首

曲子以一首廣為流傳的民謠旋律捕捉到懷鄉之情的精髓,也讓我想起舊時中國戲曲的壯闊氣勢。

接下來是艾略特卡特的《虛構之四》(Figment IV),其簡潔又激昂的節奏,讓我之前的老師山繆爾羅德斯(茱麗亞弦樂四重奏成員)震驚不已。我非常榮幸有機會能夠在卡特先生一百歲生日的慶祝活動中,學習、表演並錄製這首曲子。這首短篇獨奏曲一開始僅用兩個音符表達出堅定的語氣,以降E及D形成大七度和弦。這個音程令人不禁想跨到八度,在整首樂曲中造成不斷出現的問號。樂曲結尾的部分也顯示這個問號將無疾而終,甚至比開頭更為明顯,讓聽眾確實明白其意思及意圖。

我加入巴洛米歐絃樂四重奏時,該團與作曲家史蒂芬馬凱向來合作已久。我深愛他音樂中的樂趣及低調的光輝。《大地震動》(Groundswell)這首曲子的創作靈感來自他在義大利的蜜月之旅,七個樂章

完美連結敘述一趟旅程,令人聯想一路爬上山然後下山的景色。聽眾可以清楚聽見模仿路上特定聲音的音樂:偉士牌機車的喇叭聲、義大利電台的交談聲(仿效不懂該語言的人耳中之音)、跑下斜坡的腳步聲、輕柔的海浪聲。位於中間的第四樂章《稀薄空氣》(Thin Air),成功捕捉僅在山頂能體驗到的靜滯感,令人不禁沈思且靜謐晦暗,和其他部分形成強烈對比。

英國作曲家喬治班傑明曾於2007年參加卡內基廳的「展望」(Perspectives)計畫。他的演奏會曲目包括《為中提琴二重奏》(Viola, Viola),該曲子係受託為慶祝東京一個新演奏廳的開幕,於1997年由中提琴演奏家今井信子及貝許米特演出。我有幸與外子米夏阿摩瑞合作演出,他是巴洛米歐絃樂四重奏的中提琴手,也深深啟發了我的生命。在《為中提琴二重奏》中,中提琴不僅僅只是個中間聲部而已;作曲人似乎要演出者徹底顛覆這個刻板印象。兩個

部分的技術要求程度相當;而這首九分鐘的短曲從頭到尾的節奏也相當刺激。班傑明先生建構出一個飽滿的世界,從劇力萬鈞的漸弱到誇張的漸強,讓聽眾體驗爆發的感覺。不論是演奏或是欣賞這首曲子,都將會是令人難忘的經驗。

最後介紹的是丹麥作曲家保羅魯德斯為此次錄音特別譜曲的大作《羅曼史》(Romances)。六個細緻的樂章明亮、古怪且易懂,讓聽眾意猶未盡。

這裡的每一首曲目都以不同的組合及曲調強調中提琴的特色。能與現今作曲家合作,聽到他們親自闡述這些作品的意義,實在是一項殊榮。現在的中提琴已經不再扮演背景音樂的角色。在不與其他弦樂器競爭的情況下,中提琴已建立起自己的世界,專心發展;它不是大型小提琴,也不是小型大提琴,而是一項獨立樂器,能夠發揮自己的特色。



Violist **Hsin-Yun Huang**, recognized as one of the leading violists of her generation, came to international prominence in 1993 when she was winner of the top prize of the ARD International Music Competition in Munich and the Bunkamura Orchard Hall Award. In 1988, Ms. Huang was the youngest-ever Gold Medalist of the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition on the Isle of Man. These and other honors have propelled a career as soloist and chamber musician on stages of major concert halls throughout North America, Europe, and the Far East. Her performances include concerto appearances with the City of London

Sinfonia; the Naumberg Orchestra, the Bavarian Radio Orchestra, the Zagreb Soloists in Paris, the Tokyo Philharmonic, the Berlin Radio Symphony, the Russian State Philharmonic, the National Symphony of Taiwan, the Taipei City Symphony, the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) and the Evergreen Symphony Orchestra.

Hsin-Yun Huang has performed at prominent music festivals throughout the world. In North America, these include the Spoleto Festival, Chamber Music Northwest, the Marlboro Music Festival, the Aspen Festival, Music@Menlo, the El Paso Chamber Music Festival,

the La Jolla Summerfest, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, the Vancouver Chamber Music Festival, the Appalachian Festival, the Rockport Chamber Music Festival, the Newport Festival, the Saltbay Chamberfest, La Musica in Sarasota and the Mount Desert Festival. International festivals have included Prussia Cove (England), the St. Nazaire, Festival de Divonne (France), Spring Festival (Prague), The Rome Chamber Music Festival (Italy) The Cartagena International Festival (South America) Stavanger Festival (Sweden) and the Moritzburg Festival (Germany) among many others. Ms. Huang has collaborated with many distinguished artists, including Yo-Yo Ma, Jaime Laredo,

Joshua Bell, Joseph Suk, Menahem Pressler to name a few. Recent collaborations include performances with the Guarneri, the Juilliard, the Orion, the Brentano, the St. Lawrence and the Johannes String Quartets. Ms. Huang was a member of the Borromeo String Quartet from 1994-2000.

Hsin-Yun Huang came to England at the age of fourteen to study at the Yehudi Menuhin School with David Takeno. She continued her studies at the Curtis Institute with Michael Tree, and at the Juilliard School with Samuel Rhodes. Ms. Huang currently serves on the faculties of The Curtis Institute and The Juilliard School of Music.

Since winning the 1991 Naumburg Viola Award, **Misha Amory** has been acclaimed as one of the leading American violists of his generation. He has performed with orchestras in the United States and Europe, and has been presented in recital at New York's Tully Hall, Los Angeles' Ambassador series, Philadelphia's Mozart on the Square festival, Boston's Gardner Museum, Houston's Da Camera series and Washington's Phillips Collection. He has been invited to perform at the Marlboro Festival, the Seattle Chamber Music Festival, the Vancouver Festival, the Chamber Music Society at Lincoln Center and

the Boston Chamber Music Society, and he released a recording of Hindemith sonatas on the Musical Heritage Society label in 1993. Mr. Amory is a founding member of the Brentano String Quartet, which enjoys a distinguished concert career in the United States and abroad. The Quartet has been in residence at Princeton University since 1999. Mr. Amory holds degrees from Yale University and the Juilliard School. His principal teachers were Heidi Castleman, Caroline Levine and Samuel Rhodes. Mr. Amory serves on the faculties of the Juilliard School in New York City and the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia.

Pianist **Sarah Rothenberg** has an unusually creative career. She has performed over 80 world premieres; her original staged concerts relating music to art, literature and ideas have received critical acclaim on such notable series as Great Performers at Lincoln Center (New York), Barbican Centre (London), Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Washington, D.C.), Miller Theater (New York), and The Concertgebouw (Amsterdam); and her discography includes first U.S. recordings of works by Fanny Mendelssohn, Arnold Schoenberg, Nikolai Roslavetz, Alexander Mossolov, Arthur Lourié, as well as numerous

living composers. She performs frequently with piano duo partner Marilyn Nonken (Messiaen *Visions de l'Amen* on Bridge). A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, her teachers included Seymour Lipkin, Herbert Stessin, Mieczeslaw Horszowski and, in Paris, Yvonne Loriod. She was co-founding artistic director of the Bard Music Festival and is currently artistic and general director of Da Camera of Houston. She lives in Texas and New York City.

AMERICAN MODERN ENSEMBLE

"Devoting a program to Minimalist and microtonal compositions could easily amount to an egghead agenda; leave it to the American Modern Ensemble to make it a party instead." (Steve Smith, the *New York Times*). Since its debut in New York City in 2005, American Modern Ensemble has joyfully celebrated and showcased modern American music, gaining world-wide attention from the press and audiences alike. Hailed by the *New York Times* as having "a strong fan base", being comprised of "performers of high-quality," and for its "exceptional energy and thoughtful programming",

American Modern Ensemble (AME) is a dynamic, creative force in the new music scene. Incorporating the traditional and the cutting edge, stretching from the bawdy to the brilliant, the *New Yorker* notes that AME "consistently revels expertly in rambunctious programs". With a world-class ensemble made up of NYC's finest musicians, AME has performed and premiered hundreds of works by living composers, and continues to thrive and grow as the premier performing and recording ensemble for contemporary music.

EVERGREEN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

When the Evergreen Group established the Chang Yung-Fa Foundation in 1985, the promotion of the arts and culture was on its work agenda, in addition to its ongoing contributions to medical aid charities and education scholarships. Between 1986 and 1997, the Evergreen Group had also set up a music scholarship fund, which sponsored 28 of Taiwan's finest music students chosen to study at major music academies in the United States. Evergreen's aim was to cultivate a new generation of outstanding musical talent. Chinese violinist/conductor Kek-Tjiang Lim was appointed to act as the first music director and chief conductor.

In 2004, Ms. Ya-Hui Wang was appointed as the second music director and principal conductor, and in 2007 Gernot Schmalfuss was appointed as music director and chief conductor. The ESO has worked with many world-renowned musicians, including conductors Michiyoshi Inoue and Naoto Otomo, tenors Luciano Pavarotti, Jose Carreras, Russell Watson and Andrea Bocelli, sopranos Angela Gheorghiu, Renée Fleming, violinists Cho-liang Lin, Mayuko Kamio and Si-qing Lu, and flutist Peter-Lukas Graf. All ESO concerts have been released as a series of video and audio recordings sold for charitable causes.

Producers: Adam Abeshouse (Mackey, Ruders, Benjamin); David Starobin (Carter)
Engineer: Adam Abeshouse (Mackey, Ruders, Benjamin, Carter)
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Executive Producer: Becky Starobin

Ground Swell, *Romances*, and *Viola, Viola* were recorded October 24 & 25, 2011 in Richardson Auditorium, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey; *Figment IV* was recorded September 22, 2009 at the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York City; *Remembrance* was recorded live in 2007 in the National Concert Hall, Taipei, Taiwan.

Many thanks to Princeton University & Steven Mackey for the use of the gorgeous Richardson Hall, and to Bridge Records for believing in my dreams and to my loving family for being who you are. — *Hsin-Yun Huang*

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