SOUNDS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: MUSIC FOR VIOLA BY WOMEN COMPOSERS

by

ELITSA ATANASOVA

(Under the Direction of Maggie Snyder)

ABSTRACT

This essay accompanies a full-length CD recording of music for viola by women composers. The goal of this capstone project is to produce new recordings of the music of historically underrepresented composers, as well as to promote lesser known pieces from the viola repertoire. The composers featured are of diverse origins, ranging from the United States, England, and France, through Bulgaria. All the works have been composed and premiered during the twentieth century. The recording consists of five pieces for viola solo or viola and piano, written by Marcelle Soulage, Rebecca Clarke, Lillian Fuchs, Augusta Read Thomas and Dobrinka Tabakova. The essay includes biographical information for each of the composers, followed by a brief analysis of each piece. Chapter One is an introduction outlining the purpose and delimitations of the study. Chapters Two through Six focus on each work featured on the CD and are presented in chronological order of composition

INDEX WORDS: Marcelle Soulage, Rebecca Clarke, Lillian Fuchs, Augusta Read

Thomas, Dobrinka Tabakova, viola, piano, women composers,
new music, Incantation, Morpheus, Pirin, Sonata Pastorale.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project, to my late grandfather Pencho Dimitrov Tenekedjiev. As the only other musician in my family, he has played an important role in nurturing my love for music, in the very early steps of my musical journey. I miss him dearly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my teacher, Professor Maggie Snyder, for not only helping me to become a better musician, but also being the mentor, I needed during my time at UGA. Her excellence and her passion for pioneering music by underrepresented composers was the initial inspiration for the topic of my research, and its successful completion would not have been possible without her expertise and motherly support. I wish to thank Dr. Michael Heald and Dr. Emily Koh for serving on my committee and for their insights and feedback which were instrumental in crafting this project. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation of my former teacher and "viola dad," Dr. Misha Galaganov. The guidance and encouragement that I have received while studying with him has impacted me immensely as a musician and a person, and his patience through that process could not be overestimated.

I had the pleasure of collaborating with two wonderful pianists - Damon Denton and Dr. Elena Lyalina. Thank you both, for the musicianship and artistry, that you invested in those recordings. A very special thank you, goes to my sound engineer Annie Leeth, for her time and skillfulness in preparing the recordings. Last, but not least, I would like to thank my ever-supportive family and friends for believing in me and for being the emotional support that was fundamental for completing this degree.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sounds of the Twentieth Century: Music for Viola by Women Composers is the title I have chosen for my capstone project for the completion of the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in Viola Performance at the University of Georgia. The project consists of a full-length CD recording of compositions for solo viola, or viola and piano, by women composers, and an accompanying essay. Most of the compositions that I have selected are lesser known works and have not been established as staples in the repertoire yet, and some have not been professionally recorded before. Besides the fact that the works are all written by female composers, who are historically underrepresented, other reasons can be found, and attempts will be made to explain why those pieces have not been performed more. I purposely chose to present composers from different origins, ranging from Bulgaria, through France, England and the United States. The pieces vary in technical demand. It will be noted in each individual entry how each piece might be beneficial pedagogically, and what instrumental techniques can be reinforced while playing it.

Purpose of the Study

 To bring awareness to valuable sources in the viola repertoire and inspire further research and curiosity in violists and other musicians, who will hear the cd and read the essay.

- 2. To learn about and experience first-hand the process of recording professionally and compiling a multi segment project.
- To produce a professional quality recording of works that have not been recorded before or are underrepresented in the field.
- 4. To have a finished product representing myself as a performer that can later be used for self-promotion and supplemental material when applying for jobs.

Delimitations

The pieces that I have chosen are not meant to be considered as the most significant representation of each of the composers' styles or of the classical music tradition of any of the countries they are coming from. The choices are made based on personal preferences and the aim to find music that I have been previously unaware of. Through my experience playing those pieces, I have found that they are masterfully written and effectively showcase the qualities of the viola as an instrument and can be successfully programmed amongst other staples in the viola concert repertoire.

Link to Online Album (Souncloud)

https://soundcloud.com/elitsa-atanasova-249523856/sets/sounds-of-the-twentieth-century-music-for-viola-by-women-composers

CHAPTER 2

REBECCA CLARKE (1886-1979)

Rebecca Clarke was a British composer and violist, born in Harrow, England in 1886. She started playing the violin when she was eight years old and switched to the viola as her primary instrument in 1907. The same year she entered the Royal Academy of Music in London to study composition with Sir Charles Stanford and he recommended for her to switch to viola in order to be "right in the middle of the sound." At the academy, she studied viola with Lionel Tertis who was one of the first to promote and establish the viola as a solo instrument and to achieve international recognition. The viola became a significant part of Clarke's compositional output as well as her main instrument as a performer. She was the first female student of Stanford, as well as one of the first women to play professionally in an orchestra. She was also a member of an all-women string quartet before WW1 and in the late 20s she was a part of a female piano quartet called the English ensemble.²

Rebecca Clarke composed a number of pieces for viola and piano including Lullaby (1909), Lullaby (on an ancient Irish tune, 1913), Lullaby (1918), Untitled

¹ Rebecca Clarke, *Morpheus for viola and piano*, Oxford University Press, 2010.

² Liane Curtis, "A Case of Identity," *The Musical Times* 137, no.1839 (May 1996): 15-21, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1003935 (accessed August 30, 2019).

movement (1917-1918), Morpheus for viola and piano (1917), Sonata for viola and piano (1919), Passacaglia (on old English tune, attributed to Tallis, 1941), "I'll bid my heart be still" (old Scottish border melody, 1944). Other compositions that feature the viola with various instruments are Lullaby and Grotesque for viola (or violin) and cello (1916), Comodo et Amabile (1924) and Poem (1926) for string quartet, Dumka for viola, and piano (1941), Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale for viola and clarinet (1944).³

Her two large scale works are the viola sonata and a piano trio (1921). Both were recognized at the Berkshire Competition for Chamber Music. In 1919, the viola sonata was tied for first place with Ernest Bloch's suite for viola and piano. Both compositions received an even number of votes from the jury, so the deciding vote had to be made by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, the patron sponsoring the competition. While the names of the composers were not known to the jury members, it can be speculated that Mrs. Coolidge was aware of their identities and she gave her vote solely on "ethical and not personal lines." ⁴ The viola sonata was given an honorable mention, making Ernest Bloch's suite the official winner. While it was planned only for the winning piece to be premiered at the festival, Mrs. Coolidge decided that Clarke's sonata should also be programmed. ⁵ In the next edition of the competition in 1921, Clarke's piano trio was

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³ Rebecca Clarke, "List of Works," Rebecca Clarke Society, https://www.rebeccaclarke.org/worksi/ (accessed August 28, 2019).

⁴ David Bynog, "The 1919 Berkshire Festival Competition: A Momentous Weekend in the Viola's History," at Violinist.com, https://www.violinist.com/blog/dbynog/20198/27888/ (accessed October 12, 2019).

⁵ Ibid.

again a runner up and as a result Coolidge awarded Clarke a \$1000 commission for the 1923 edition of the festival, which brought to life her Rhapsody for cello and piano.⁶

Other than the sonata and the trio, Clarke mainly composed smaller chamber instrumental or vocal pieces with song-like character and simple forms, and choral music.

Morpheus for Viola and Piano (1917)

Morpheus is a short piece for viola and piano, which precedes the well-known viola sonata. It was composed in 1917 and premiered by the composer herself in 1918 in recital in the Aeolian Hall, New York. In the program, and in both surviving manuscripts it was listed under a pseudonym - Antony Trent. That was the only time she ever used a pen name for her compositions. The reason was that the "Lullaby and Grotesque" for viola and cello were also programmed on the same concert and according to her own words, it would "look silly" to have her name listed several times. Even though she considered it "the worst one of the group," it provoked more interest in the critics, than the pieces signed with her own name. It can be speculated whether or not the piece drew more attention because of the use of a pseudonym.

Morpheus, as well as most of her other short pieces, has a programmatic title.

However, the composer did not leave any explanation about the name. Morpheus comes

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⁶ Liane Curtis, "A Case of Identity," *The Musical Times* 137, no.1839 (May 1996): 15, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1003935 (accessed October 12, 2019).

⁷ Rebecca Clarke, *Morpheus for viola and piano*, Oxford University Press, 2010.

from the Greek mythology and is associated with the ancient Greek god of dreams, son of Hypnos, the god of sleep. In translation from Greek, "morphe" means to transform, change shape or character. Morpheus was also a messenger for the gods wherein he would take the appearance of a trusted person of the one to whom he is delivering the message. 8 It is not confirmed whether Clarke took the mythology in mind while composing, but when exploring the piece, the use of motivic development throughout and the way she transforms each motive to morph into the next one makes it possible to see those connections.

The piece is structured in a loose ternary form followed by a short cadenza-like passage in the viola, before the final closure. The first section has an intimate, vocal character reminiscent of a lullaby. The opening theme is four measures long and spans the interval of a fourth, which further implies its singing, folksy quality. After its first statement, the opening phrase is further developed and expanded before being repeated an octave lower at the end of the A section (m.13). It quietly dissolves into the B section and prepares the listener for the more improvisatory and passionate second theme area. One of the prominent features in Clarke's music is the use of modality. In the first section she uses E-flat Dorian mode, which goes to D Aeolian mode in the B section in m.21.

The middle section is characterized by asymmetrical phrasing and expands both the pitch and the dynamic range in both the piano and viola. The texture in the piano

⁸ Anca Irina Dumitru, "Greek God Morpheus," Greek Gods and Goddesses, http://www.greekgods-and-goddesses.com/greek-god-morpheus.html (accessed August 28, 2019).

accompaniment also changes from chordal to more linear with a lot of arpeggiation, glissandi and polyrhythm. At the point where the melody reaches its highest peak in m. 34, the line is abruptly interrupted by a caesura after which it starts winding down, slowing the pace, and bringing back melodic material from the beginning. The first theme comes back in m.47, but in the wrong key area. Through sequential repetition and fragmentation, the home sonority of E-flat is finally achieved in m.56, where the A¹ section begins. While the viola repeats the exact same material from the opening, this time an octave lower, the piano is playing glissando on the black keys which creates harmonic ambiguity through the juxtaposition of the Dorian mode in the viola and the pentatonic that is implied by the glissandi. The cadenza passage in the viola starts at m.71 and serves as a bridge and transition to connect harmonically the return of the first theme with the final statement of the second theme which is featured in the piano part, in m. 76. The viola and piano alternate with fragments of the theme, until they finally come together in rhythmic unison, in m.82, where they play the last statement of the phrase in parallel fourths. The fact that Clarke mutes the viola in the beginning and end, provides a nice sound framework for the piece.

Even though *Morpheus* is not the most renowned of Rebecca Clarke's compositions, it certainly possesses a number of qualities that make it an important asset to the viola repertoire. In many ways it foreshadows the appearance of the viola sonata and in that aspect, it is a great addition to the student repertoire and curriculum. On a smaller scale than the sonata, it provides an opportunity to the performer to explore the wide range of tone colors that the instrument can create, as well as to provoke the use of

imagination in building a unique interpretation. The score is not heavily edited and leaves plenty of room for exploration and search of one's original musical voice.

CHAPTER 3

MARCELLE SOULAGE (1894-1970)

Marcelle Fanny Henriette Soulage was a pianist, music critic, and composer. She was born in 1894 in Lima, Peru to French parents. The family moved back to Paris when she was four and a half years old. She started taking piano lessons at the age of five and later studied piano and composition at the Paris Conservatory with renowned pedagogues like Georges Caussade, Paul Vidal, Vincent d'Indy, and Nadia Boulanger. During her studies, she won numerous awards for accompaniment, composition, counterpoint, and music history. Soulage taught piano and harmony at the Conservatory of Orlean between 1921-1925, and theory at the Paris Conservatory between 1949-1965. She passed away in 1970, in Paris.

Marcelle Soulage composed orchestral, chamber and vocal music. For some of her works she used the name Marc Souval.¹ Two of her earlier compositions for orchestra *Valse* (1911), and *Menuet* (1918) were signed with the pseudonym. Her other orchestral compositions include: *Invocation à la nuit et danse orientale* (1928), and *Badinages* (1931). In the chamber and solo instrumental genres, she composed: a Suite for violin, viola and piano (1918); two sonatas - for viola and piano op.25, and for cello and piano,

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¹ Walter Wilson Cobbet. Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music, Volume 2, 1930.

op.31 (1919); Sonata for violin and piano, op.36 (1920); Sonata for viola solo, op.43 (1921), String quartet and Piano trio (1922); Piano quartet (1925) and a variety of other pieces featuring woodwinds, harp and piano. She also composed songs and choral music, as well as a theatrical musical comedy called *Vive la Chanson* (1929).

Sonata for Viola and Piano, op.25 (1919)

The Sonata for Viola and Piano, op. 25, was written in 1919 and published in 1921. The same year, the piece won second prize at the *Salon des Musiciens Français*. ²

The sonata was dedicated to the famous French violist Maurice Vieux who became a viola professor at the Paris Conservatory in 1918. He was a key figure in the development of the French viola school and many composers like Max Bruch, Philippe Gaubert, and Reynaldo Hahn among others, dedicated works to him. ³ The Sonata op. 25 has four movements: I. Allegro, II. Scherzo, III. Complainte, and IV. Ronde. The composer used a combination of Italian and French markings for the different movement titles, tempi and expression markings.

The first movement, Allegro, is in sonata form. While most of the sonata form principles are followed, there are some deviations like the usage of modes instead of

² Marcelle Soulage. *Sonate pour Piano et Alto*. Buffet Crampon, Paris, 1921.

³ Maurice Riley. The History of the Viola, Volume 1, 1980.

major-minor tonality and asymmetrical length of phrases. The principal theme is in D Dorian mode, but in the way that the melodic line is constructed, it can also be heard as a pentatonic scale. In the common practice, a typical theme was usually eight or sixteen measures long, while in this movement the principal theme is fourteen measures and it is built on motives with varying lengths of three or four measures each. The transition is harmonically unstable and through its sequential nature, it serves to prepare for the new tonal center of C, of the secondary theme. The transition has a loose sentence structure. The secondary theme is underlying the Ab Major triad, but its overall tonal center is C, implied by the pedal note in the piano bass line. The composer uses the melodic mode of C minor, and the so-called *Hungarian* or *Gypsi* minor mode, which features two augmented seconds between 3rd - 4th, and 6th - 7th scale degree.

The Development begins with the principal theme in the piano, but after that primarily the secondary theme gets developed in the viola part. The first theme comes back in the piano part at the retransition, starting at m. 115. The Coda, beginning in m. 203 uses the material of the principal theme, but it is transformed through augmentation - the tempo is approximately twice slower, and the theme is presented in chorale texture, with massive chords in the piano and an accompanying role of the viola part. The end of the movement unravels restating smaller fragments of the first theme, which by the last few measures are reduced to only the five notes of the initial basic idea. This fragmentation further underlines the pentatonic sonority.

The second movement is in the form of Scherzo & Trio. The Scherzo begins in F major. The first section is very fragmented, and it is challenging to describe it with

classical theme types. It can be heard as a loose hybrid theme, outlined by a two-measure introduction and a two-measure closing gesture in the piano part. The middle section of the scherzo starting at m. 41 with the tonal center of Db has a sequential character and combines the functions of continuation and standing on the dominant, varying the material from the beginning but changing the character and articulation. In this movement, the motives are again of unusual length. In this case, they are five-measures long. Overall the scherzo is in small ternary form.

The number five seems to be important in the creative decisions of the composer and is incorporated in different ways throughout the whole piece, starting from the pentatonic sonority in the first movement, through the five-measure long motives in the Scherzo, and further in the trio. The trio has an alternating meter of 3/4 + 2/4 measures, which grouped equals five-beat motives. Contrastingly, in the left hand of the piano part, the suggested phrasing from the slurs, groups the notes in eight-beat motives, which are juxtaposed with the five-note phrasing in the right hand. That creates polyrhythm and the effect of a hemiola. Another aspect in which Soulage's composition deviates from the classical sonata cycle is the fact that she changes the order of the movements from how it is most commonly used. Instead of having the slow movement to be second in the cycle, she moves it to the third place and instead uses the Scherzo as the second movement.

The third movement is called *Complainte* which from French means "lament." It is in D minor, which is considered one of the "darkest" keys in music with regards to character. The title *complainte* or lament gives more information about the character of the music, rather than the actual formal structure of the movement. The *complainte* was a

form used in music and poetry in the Medieval period and refers to a poem or a poem set to a song, with dark, tragic character. Some of its characteristics are the unequal lengths of the verses and an asymmetrical rhyming at the end of phrases. Lament as a musical form, have also been used in the Baroque opera and through the Romantic period. In this sonata, it serves as an example of the composer's interest in the old forms and expressive tools such as modes, pentatonic scales, chromatic key relationships but realized in new ways, by a young composer at the beginning of the Twentieth century.

At the beginning of the third movement, the changing meters are present again – 3/8 + 2/8 with occasional 4/8 measure. The form is most clearly defined by strophic or couplet structure, where the couplets are varied with each repetition. A basic model of this movement's form is ternary (aa¹ bb¹ a¹a). The melodic material is altered through voice exchanges and rhythmical variations. For example, the melodic gesture used in a¹, in the viola (m. 23), is the same as in the beginning of the movement, but due to the new 3/4 meter, it gets a different meaning, since the natural emphasis of stronger and weaker beats falls on different notes of the gesture. In the middle section (m. 33), the instruments exchange roles, and the piano is the first one to introduce the theme.

The last movement is in A minor, in rondo form. There is a recurring refrain that alternates with contrasting episodes of different characters. While the rondo principles can be mapped out in that movement, it also deviates quite a bit from the norm. It begins with an introduction, then alternates the refrain with three episodes, and finishes with a Coda. The unusual feature of this rondo is that every time the refrain comes back, it is varied. Most often, in rondo form, the refrain appears unchanged between the episodes,

which are usually the ones adding contrast. The introduction of the Rondo is eight measures long and it is followed by the refrain, introduced first in the piano, at m.9. After the first episode, the refrain comes back, but in the wrong key of C minor (m.58).

The second episode (m.79) brings back the thematic material from the opening melodic gesture of the *Complainte*, in augmentation. The next time the refrain comes back (m.91) it is in E minor. The third episode (m.116) starts with a quote from the beginning of the third movement but it is interrupted by the triplet figure from the refrain, in the viola part alternating with a quote from the principal theme of the first movement (m.126), in the piano part. In the *Modéré* section preceding the Coda (m.164), the piano outlines the melodic gesture from the first movement, which was also the thematic material used in the Coda of the first movement. In the Coda (m.175) the composer cleverly combines the material heard in the first episode of the 4th movement, in the viola part, with the melodic line of the main theme of the third movement. By combining the thematic material from the first, third and fourth movement, the composer achieves a unified cycle. The last movement serves as a conclusion tying together all the themes that have been previously introduced in the piece.

The sonata certainly deserves a prominent place in the viola repertoire as it is an excellent composition in all regards. It is unfortunate that it was never reprinted after the first publication and there is only one original copy of the music to be found in the United States library system.

CHAPTER 4

LILLIAN FUCHS (1903-1995)

Lillian Fuchs was born on November 18th, 1902, in New York. She started playing the piano at a very young age and became an accomplished pianist giving solo recitals as well as accompanying her older brother Joseph, who was a violinist. Harry, their younger brother played the cello. Their father Phillip Fuchs was in the fur trading business, but he was also an amateur violinist and a passionate educator. He taught violin to many young pupils, including his own children. Even though she was already proficient at the piano, Lillian desired to learn the violin and make it her primary instrument. First, she studied the violin with her brother's teacher Louis Svecenski, who was the violist of the Kneisel Quartet and violin teacher at the Institute of Musical Art (now the Juilliard School of Music). With his help, she improved quickly and began her studies at the Institute with Franz Kneisel. In addition to the violin, Fuchs also studied composition with Percy Goetschius.

She graduated from the Institute of Musical Art in 1924 with the highest honors and a silver medal and received two awards of which one was for composition. In 1930, Lillian Fuchs married the businessman and amateur violist Ludwig Stein, whom she first met at a chamber music reading at the house of Edgar and Rosalie Leventritt. The Leventritts were wealthy music patrons and often hosted chamber music evenings at their house, where family and friends got together to play chamber music. It was also at those

evenings where Lillian Fuchs started giving chamber music coachings to passionate young players. ¹

Even though she made her New York debut as a violinist in 1926, around the same time she was advised by her teacher Franz Kniesel to explore the viola as an opportunity to play in a chamber ensemble. She was one of the founding members of the Perolé Quartet and was part of it from 1927 to 1942 when they separated. The quartet was formed after an audition held by several wealthy music patrons' families in New York, one of which was the Leventritt family. Two of the judges for this competition were Jascha Heifetz and Mischa Elman. The chosen members of the quartet were Joseph Coleman, David Mankovitz and Julian Kahn. Lillian Fuchs was the only female member of the quartet. She was offered the viola position and she maintained it for the entire period of the group's existence.

Lillian Fuchs was active as a solo performer as well as a chamber musician and the collaboration with her brother Joseph is of particular significance. One of the crucial points of her career was the performance of Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante with him and the National Orchestral Association, in 1945. Following that concert, they performed and recorded this piece on several other occasions and that helped it gain popularity, which it

¹ David L. Sills, "Lillian Fuchs: One Great Life." *Journal of the American Viola Society* 12, no. 1 (January 1, 1996): 63-66, http://proxy-

remote.galib.uga.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rih&AN =A1112363&site=ehost-live (accessed September 14, 2019).

was still lacking at the time.² Joseph Fuchs was one of the founders of a chamber ensemble called the Musician's Guild and his sister was a part of it until 1957 when it ceased its activities.

A number of composers wrote and dedicated pieces to Ms. Fuchs. The most notable is the Czech composer Bohuslav Martinů, who wrote his Sonata for Viola and Piano, Three Madrigals for Violin and Viola, and Duo for Violin and Viola. His Rhapsody Concerto for Viola and Orchestra was not explicitly dedicated to her, but it is very possible that he wrote it with her in mind. Other compositions dedicated to her are Quincy Porter's Duo for Viola and Harp and Jacques de Menasce's Sonata for Viola and Piano.³

Lillian Fuchs left a large number of recordings, however many of them are unissued or nearly impossible to find. One of the most valuable contributions to the viola repertoire that she is to be credited for, are the Bach Cello Suites. She was the first one to play them on viola, and to record all six suites. ⁴ Some of her recordings that are still available are Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante, and the duos with violin; Beethoven - String trio and Serenade; Debussy - Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp.

² Ibid., 66.

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³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Even though Lillian Fuchs was coaching chamber music earlier in her life, her path as a viola teacher started much later. She taught chamber music in the Manhattan School of Music since 1962, after rejecting the first offer to teach viola at the Juilliard School of Music in 1961. It wasn't until 1971 that she went to teach viola at Juilliard, at the age of 69. Other places that she taught were the Mannes School, the Cleveland Institute of Music, as well as the summer festivals in Aspen, Kniesel Hall and the Banff Center for the Arts. Some of her most renowned students include Isaac Stern, Pinchas Zukerman and Dorothy Delay.

Fuchs studied composition simultaneously with the violin, but her works didn't get published until the 1950s. Her compositional output was not large and the only concert piece she wrote for the viola was the *Sonata Pastorale*. The rest of her published works consist of three books of technical studies for viola and a piece called *Jotta* for violin and piano. The first of the three books consists of Twelve Caprices for viola and was published in 1950. Those caprices were of the most advanced level of difficulty and not meant for the students' use but rather as an aid for her own improvement in playing the viola. Next were the Sixteen Fantasy Etudes, published in 1959, and last were the Fifteen Characteristic Studies, appeared in 1965. The publications appeared in reverse order of difficulty. The three collections are an essential asset in the viola repertoire,

⁵ Ibid., 67.

¹⁰¹a., 07.

⁶ Amedee Daryl Williams, Lillian Fuchs, First Lady of the Viola, 1994.

⁷ Ibid.

where most of the technical studies that are used are transcribed from violin. Even though they are not meant for concert use a lot of them are appropriate to be included in recital programs or used as encores.

Sonata Pastorale for Solo Viola (1949)

The Sonata for Unaccompanied Viola was written in 1949 and premiered by the composer herself on a recital in New York in 1953. The piece was dedicated to Rosalie Leventritt. It was given the name *Sonata Pastorale* in 1956, when it was published. Since the sonata is her only composition meant to be performed in concert, and since it was composed right after the Twelve Caprices, it is easy to assume that it summarizes all technical challenges. In fact, the piece doesn't surpass the technical difficulties presented in the caprices. The first movement of the sonata is called *Fantasia* and the second is *Pastorale*. The third movement *Energico* follows without a break.

The *Fantasia* has two main sections, *Maestoso* and *Allegro*. In the *Maestoso*, there are two contrasting characters that alternate in each phrase. The opening has a fanfare-like character realized by chords which establish and emphasize the harmony through repetition. The response motive has more linear texture, stepwise motion, softer dynamic and is marked *teneramente* (tenderly). The first motive can be described as

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⁸ Lillian Fuchs, Sonata Pastorale for Unaccompanied Viola, Associated Music Publishers, Inc., 1956.

powerful and demanding, while the second can be assigned a gentler, yearning or pleading feeling. Following is a transitional material marked *Risoluto* which leads to the *Allegro* and intensifies the conflict between the duality of characters. The *Allegro* still alternates the two main moods of the movement but extends the length of the episodes in which each feeling prevails. The initial thematic material keeps being transformed in different ways and some of the features associated with one of the characters get attributed to the other one, which makes them merge in a cohesive whole. For example, the linear material gets more dynamic development and more angular motion. The movement feels like a constant race between the two characters, but as it unwinds towards the end, the dominant character is the second one, the one that started as pleading and full of uncertainty.

The second movement, *Pastorale*, is the one that possibly gave the inspiration for the title of the sonata. The tempo is *Andante semplice* and the movement is more introspective in nature. Even though it is called *Pastorale*, it can hardly be described as idyllic. The single line melody could resemble a song in the form of a monologue, but the frequent use of chromaticism and intervals like the tritone which appears almost on every line gives it a feeling of uneasiness and suspense. The static mood is disrupted by a rapidly ascending scale followed by elements from the first movement like the drone-like open strings, as well as destabilization of the rhythm by slurring uneven number of beats and accenting the weak beats of the measure. A short *Allegro* section with a transitional character precedes the third movement, which is played attacca.

The third movement, *Energico*, begins with the fast, motoric motion in triplets familiar from the first movement's *Allegro* section. The frenzy of the *Energico* is disturbed by two chords, a caesura and a change in key signature, followed by a brief reminiscence of the thematic material from the *Pastorale*. Much shortened, it leads to another quote from the very opening of the first movement's *Maestoso*. The whole opening section of the first movement is restated without any variation and is succeeded by the final *Allegro* which gets even more intensified with double stops added to the running triplets and the tempo change to *piu vivo* towards the end. The *piu vivo* section can be attributed the function of a Coda, serving as a culmination of the entire piece.

CHAPTER 5

AUGUSTA READ THOMAS (b.1964)

Augusta Read Thomas is an American composer born in 1964, in Glen Cove,
New York. She studied composition at Northwestern University, Yale and the Royal
Academy of Music in London. Her composition teachers include Oliver Knussen, Jacob
Druckman, Alan Stout and Bill Karlins. She also held fellowships at Harvard University,
the Tanglewood Music Center for the Arts, the Aspen Music Festival and the Bunting
Institute of Radcliffe College among others.

Throughout her career, Thomas has been critically acclaimed and has received various awards, including a Grammy in 2000, in the category "Best Recording by a Small Ensemble, with or without conductor," for the album "Colors of Love," by the vocal ensemble Chanticleer. Some of the other prizes that she has received are from: the Siemens Foundation in Munich, ASCAP, BMI, the National Endowment of the Arts, the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the Koussevitzky Foundation, the New York Foundation for the

¹ Augusta Read Thomas, "Biography," Augusta Read Thomas: Composer, http://www.augustareadthomas.com/about/index.html#bio (accessed October 1, 2019).

² Augusta Read Thomas, "Awards and Honors," Augusta Read Thomas: Composer, http://www.augustareadthomas.com/press/awards.html (accessed October 1, 2019).

³ Ibid.

Arts, the John W. Hechinger Foundation, the Kate Neal Kinley Foundation, The Debussy Trio Music Foundation and Thomas van Straaten, Columbia University (Bearns Prize), the Naumburg Foundation, the Fromm Foundation, the Barlow Endowment, Harriett Eckstein, the New York State Council for the Arts, Chamber Music America and many others. She was recognized with the Third Century Award from the Office of Copyrights and Patents in Washington, D.C., and in 2001 she was named one of Chicago's 40 under 40 by Crain's Business Magazine.⁴

Another significant part of Augusta Read Thomas' work is her dedication to teaching. She is currently a University Professor of Composition at the University of Chicago, a title that is held by very few people. Other positions she has held are at the Eastman School of Music, Northwestern University, Tanglewood and the Aspen Music Festival. In regard to her work as a teacher she says "*Teaching is a natural extension of my creative process and of my enthusiasm for the music of others*." She has collaborated with numerous orchestras and is currently the composer-in-residence with the Eugene Symphony Orchestra in Oregon. She was the longest serving composer-in-residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra between 1997 and 2006, working with Daniel Barenboim and Pierre Boulez.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Augusta Read Thomas, "Biography," Augusta Read Thomas: Composer, http://www.augustareadthomas.com/about/index.html#bio (accessed October 1, 2019).

⁶ Ibid.

Augusta Read Thomas is a very prolific composer and her works cover a wide spectrum of genres and ensemble configurations. She composes for orchestra, band, solo, chamber music, chorus, opera, ballet, and music for children. Her discography includes over 75 commercially recorded, and several self-produced CDs. Thomas' works can be divided largely into two groups: large-scale ensemble works and smaller solo and chamber instrumental or vocal pieces. She's written three cello concertos, three violin concertos, two viola concertos, one of which is a transcription of the cello one; two for trombone; double concerto for violin and flute and concertos for horn, alto saxophone and a concerto for orchestra, as well as a number of orchestral pieces and smaller ensemble pieces. Her compositions are all titled, even though her music cannot be described as programmatic. A lot of the short solo pieces have versions for different instruments, created by the composer, making them available to a wider range of performers.

Thomas' musical journey started when she was very young. As the youngest sibling, she was exposed to music at home early in her life and started playing piano at the age of four. When she was in third grade, she started playing the trumpet and played for fourteen years, through her college years, at Northwestern University, where she was

⁷ Stephen Free, "Thomas, Augusta Read," *Grove Music Online*, 2001 https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000042559 (accessed October 6, 2019).

⁸ Augusta Read Thomas, "Works," Augusta Read Thomas: Composer, http://www.augustareadthomas.com/works/index.html (accessed October 6, 2019).

a trumpet performance major. The fact the she was a performer herself plays a major role in her compositional process. Her scores are crafted in great detail with attention to every character, articulation, tempo or duration marking. She adds a lot of adjectives around the notes to describe moods, direction of the musical phrase, and changes in speed and sound color. Despite the challenging nature of her pieces, her ideas are brought to life by the clarity of the notation leaving the performer with a very clear map of the composer's intentions.

Even though she was a trumpet player, she finds inspiration in writing for strings because of the expressiveness and humanity, and the singing nature of the instruments. Her approach to composing for strings echoes her overall aesthetic as a composer, only using a single instrument to express her ideas on a smaller scale. ¹⁰ She expresses on multiple occasions that she is inspired by the music of Bach, the late Beethoven and Stravinsky, but her music sounds nothing like theirs. It is translated through her own musical language and expressive means. Her compositions are also influenced by jazz music and poetry. She does not work in crossover genres, however in her music can be found references of the techniques used in jazz, like elaborate rhythms and far-reaching harmonies, as well as the idea of "captured improvisation" a term she uses herself to

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⁹ University of Chicago, "Augusta Read Thomas," University of Chicago: Division of the Humanities and Arts, https://music.uchicago.edu/people/augusta-read-thomas (accessed October 6, 2019).

¹⁰ Thomas May, "Composer Augusta Read Thomas Has No Time for Creative Boundaries," Strings Magazine, April 2, 2018, https://stringsmagazine.com/composer-augusta-read-thomas-has-no-time-for-creative-boundaries/ (accessed October 6, 2019).

describe the character of her music that is achieved by the meticulous manner of notation. In that regard, she says "I like my music to have the feeling that it is organically being self-propelled on the spot. Like we, the audience, were overhearing a captured improvisation. Comes from all my Jazz listening."¹¹

Augusta Read Thomas began composing as a child, but much of her earlier works, written before 1997 are withdrawn by her as she considered them not being good enough to remain in her legacy. *Incantation* for Solo Violin is one of the few pieces that are written before 1997 but was not withdrawn by the author.

Incantation for Solo Viola (1995)

Incantation is a short piece originally for solo violin, but there are versions for viola and cello as well. Among the other works that Thomas wrote for solo violin are Caprice, Pulsar, Dream Catcher, Rhea Enchanted, Rush, Venus Enchanted and Rainbow Bridge to Paradise. Incantation is only about five minutes in duration but carries a heavy emotional charge. It was composed in 1995, commissioned by Catherine Tait, who was at the time suffering from cancer. Catherine Tait was a renowned violin pedagogue, faculty at the Eastman School of Music. Prior to Eastman, she taught at Michigan State

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¹¹ Augusta Read Thomas, "Augusta on Jazz Influences on her work," Augusta Read Thomas: Composer, http://www.augustareadthomas.com/about/writings/jazz.html (accessed October 6, 2019).

University and the University of Illinois. She was known for her interest in performing new works and she premiered the piece on a recital in Rochester, NY on November 18, 1995, months before her passing. As described in the program notes by the composer, the music celebrates her "generosity of spirit" and "sings out, with beauty and grace, always with richness and elegance." The viola version was premiered by Colin Belisle on June 18, 2006, at the New England Conservatory in Boston, MA.

The piece is in loose ABA form, with relatively short A sections and more expanded middle part. A signature characteristic of the compositional style are the short melodic cells comprised usually of two notes, moving stepwise. They get transformed in a variety of ways, by adding different harmonic layers through double stops or compound melody lines, elongating the melodic motive or changing register and color. The music is densely marked, in a typical manner for the composer and there are specific instructions almost on every note of the piece. The way the rhythm is spelled out is very precise, and along with the specific markings for tempos of each section and all the variations of it throughout, the composer achieves the effect of a "captured improvisation" which is so characteristic of her music and draws an inspiration of the improvisations occurring in jazz music.

The music seemingly flows free of restrictions, with some abrupt interruptions of silence which makes it sound like it is being created in the moment of the performance,

¹² Augusta Read Thomas, "Incantation (1995)," Augusta Read Thomas: Composer, http://www.augustareadthomas.com/composition/incantation.html (accessed October 6, 2019).

while in fact, all of the information for the performer is indicated in the score. In the composer's own words, the art that inspires her "...has elements of order, mystery, love, recklessness, and desperation" and for her "...music must be alive and jump off the page and out of the instrument as if something big is at stake." Those characteristics can certainly be traced in *Incantation* especially when the dedication of the piece is taken into consideration.

The piece starts peacefully and progresses through more intense and troubled emotions transitioning to feelings of anger, distress and deep pain to finish returning to the peaceful and somewhat distanced mood of the beginning. Even though in the last A section Thomas uses the melodic material from the beginning, she transforms it through rhythmic and dynamic changes. She makes it flow more smoothly than in the beginning, eliminating some of the register changes and some of the disruptions in the line. She then finishes with a written-out retardation, expanding the duration of the last notes, following a natural decline in dynamic as the line descends. Even though the closing section brings somewhat more peace than the beginning, the piece finishes on the interval of a major seventh which is left unresolved and leaves a feeling of hopelessness and predetermination.

CHAPTER 6

DOBRINKA TABAKOVA (b.1980)

Dobrinka Tabakova was born in 1980, in the family of doctors, in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. When she was eleven years old, her family moved to London, England where she still lives. She studied at Alleyn's School and at the Royal Academy of Music, where she focused on composition, piano and conducting. While she was pursuing Bachelor and Master of Music degrees, at the Guildhall School for Music and Drama (GSMD), she also attended summer composition workshops at the Centre Acanthes in France, as well as programs at the conservatories in Prague and Milano. Upon graduation, she remained at the GSMD as a Composition Fellow and served as a president of the Contemporary Music Society. She received her Doctorate in Composition in 2008 from the King's College in London. Among her composition teachers are Diana Burell, Robert Keeley, Andrew Schulz, and Simon Bainbridge, and she has participated in masterclasses with John Adams, Alexander Goehr, Louis Andriessen, and Ianis Xenakis to name a few. ¹

Dobrinka Tabakova has received a prize from the Vienna International Music Competition, the GSMD Lutoslawski Composition Prize, another one for an anthem for

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¹ Dobrinka Tabakova, "Full Biography," Dobrinka Tabakova: Composer, http://www.dobrinka.com/about/Dobrinka%20Tabakova%20full%20bio%202016.pdf (accessed October 7, 2019).

the Queen's Golden Jubilee Celebrations, the Adam Prize of King's College, and the First Prize and Sorel Medallion in Choral Composition, New York. She was also a finalist for the Gaudeamus Prize in Amsterdam, in 2010.²

The first CD, titled String Paths, containing solely recordings of Tabakova's music was released in 2013, by ECM. It contains a Concerto for Cello and Strings, Suite in Old Style, for viola and chamber orchestra, a string trio called "Insight," the string septet "Such Different Paths" and "Frozen River Flows" a trio for violin, accordion and double bass. The CD was nominated for the 56th Annual Grammy Awards and was also one of the four albums supporting the nomination of the ECM founder Manfred Eicher for Classical Producer of the Year.³ Dobrinka Tabakova's newest CD Kynance Cove, On the South Downs, and Works for Choir was released in September 2019. It features works for choir and is recorded in collaboration with the Truro Cathedral Choir, the BBC Concert Orchestra, Natalie Clein (cello) and Joseph Wicks (organ) under the direction of Christopher Gray.⁴

An active participant in the European music scene, Tabakova has been the composer-in-residence at the Oxford Chamber Music Festival, Leicester International

² Ibid

³ Ibid.

⁴ Presto Classical, "Dobrinka Tabakova: Kynance Cove, On the South Downs, and Works for Choir," Presto Classical, https://www.prestomusic.com/classical/products/8658116--dobrinkatabakova-kynance-cove-on-the- south-downs-and-works-for-choir#related (accessed October 7, 2019).

Chamber Music Festival, Utrecht International Chamber Music Festival, and at the Kremerata Baltica Festival in Latvia. She has also been a guest composer at festivals in Germany, Austria, Croatia, Hong Kong and Bulgaria. In the summer of 2019 she was the guest composer at the second edition of the newly established Chamber Music Festival "Off the Beaten Path" taking place in Kovachevica, Bulgaria. The festival brings together Bulgarian and international performers for a several days of chamber music concerts in the village of Kovachevica nestled in the picturesque Rhodope Mountain range. 6

Dobrinka Tabakova started to take piano lessons when she was around six or seven years old and simultaneously with that started composing. Even though her parents are not musicians but scientists and academics, the family appreciated classical music. She grew up listening to her grandfather's huge LP collection and it was through this that she was first introduced to the staples of the classical music repertoire like Bach, Beethoven and Schubert. Some of the more contemporary influences in her music are linked to the music of Olivier Messiaen and Iannis Xenakis. When composing some of her main drives are the creating of beautiful melodies and exploring the different layers in music. Another aspect that is of big importance for her are the acoustic sounds. The

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⁵ Dobrinka Tabakova, "Full Biography," Dobrinka Tabakova: Composer, http://www.dobrinka.com/about/Dobrinka%20Tabakova%20full%20bio%202016.pdf (accessed October 7, 2019).

⁶ "Off the Beaten Path," https://neo-path.com/en/classical-chamber-music-festival-in-kovachevitsa (accessed October 7, 2019).

⁷ Ruth Prieto, "Interview with Composer Dobrinka Tabakova," El Compositor Habla, May 24, 2019, https://www.elcompositorhabla.com/es/noticias.zhtm?arg_id=1610 (accessed October 9, 2019).

sounds of acoustic instruments or voices can be traced as an underlying constant in her compositions. Silence is one more element that plays an important role in her compositional process. As she states in a recent interview - "Silence is the beginning of music and it is full of possibilities" and "you need to have something to say in order to break the silence."

Pirin Suite for Solo Viola (1999)

Pirin is a suite for solo viola in three movements. It was written in 1999 and dedicated to the prominent Ukrainian-British violist Maxim Rysanov, who premiered it in 2000. This is the first of three pieces dedicated to Rysanov. The other two works are Suite in Old Style for Viola, Harpsichord and Strings, and Suite in Jazz Style for Viola and Piano. In this piece the composer drew inspiration from the Bulgarian nature and folklore. Pirin is the name of a mountain range in southwestern Bulgaria. The folk character of the piece aims to illustrate the dramatic mountain scenery.

Tabakova utilized techniques characteristic of the *gadulka* - a traditional Bulgarian bowed instrument used mainly in folklore ensembles and associated with dance music. The *gadulka* is a descendant of the medieval rebek and is also called the

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Dobrinka Tabakova, "Pirin: Suite for solo viola," Valonius Press, London, 1999.

Bulgarian fiddle. It has three or four main strings and up to sixteen resonating strings. There are various ways of tuning, but most commonly the strings are tuned on the notes A, E, A. The main strings rest on the bridge, like with other string instruments, but the resonating ones are underneath, going through holes in the bridge. The *gadulka* is held upright either with a strap, or on the knee, if played sitting. The instrument is pear-shaped and is often carved from a single piece of wood. Unlike the classical string instruments, it doesn't have a nut, before the pegbox and doesn't have a fingerboard. The strings do not touch the wood of the neck, they are played like harmonics, and sometimes fingernails are also used to stop the strings. The bow of the *gadulka* is short and curved, and it does not have a frog. The bow hair is pre-tightened to the necessary level for playing and is held from bellow, similarly to a German double bass bow hold.¹⁰

Pirin consists of three short movements. The first movement is fast and repetitive and is built on repeated patterns in 7/8. The sound emerges from silence and the gradually increasing dynamic together with the effect of *sul ponticello* technique transitioning to ordinary playing create the effect of something approaching from a distance. The added chords on the first beats remind of stomps during a folklore dance. The movement requires an excellent bow control and left-hand facility in order to be executed without disturbing the rhythmical drive of the music.

¹⁰ David Brown, "Gadulka: The Bulgarian Fiddle," https://larkinthemorning.com/blogs/articles/gadulka-the-bulgarian-fiddle (accessed October 10, 2019).

The second movement is called Recitativo and big part of it does not have a meter. The phrases are unified under slurs and are separated by silence. The movement has two main characters. In the beginning the music is slow and melancholic, and sounds improvisatory, reminding of a recitative or unaccompanied song. The first section is comprised of four phrases, with varying lengths, increasing with each subsequent one. The viola part imitates a two-voice vocal melody. The voices move either in parallel or oblique motion, where the lower voice is more static, while the upper voice is more melodic and moves around a certain pitch center. Both the melodic range of each voice and the range of the interval between the two voices rarely surpasses the interval of a fifth. The second section has a contrasting dance-like character in fast tempo. After only two measures of the rhythmic pattern it is interrupted by a quote from the recitativo, but right after that it returns to the dance. In Bulgarian folklore music using alternating meters of different length is a common practice and even though the fast section is written in 4/4 it can be heard as a combination between 9/16 and 7/16. It is counted as a 4+3 pattern, with the first beats being elongated by an extra sixteenth note. The ending of the movement is left to the performer's imagination with the indication to improvise for approximately 30 seconds, using the rhythmic and melodic material from the movement.

The last movement begins slowly, like a mourning procession approaching from afar. Unlike in the second movement, the melody has more instrumental character reminiscent of the sound of bagpipes. The composer uses a lot of open strings and perfect intervals to create the effect of openness and perhaps the allusion of overlooking the wide-open landscape of the mountains. After the first theme is restated the next section

begins without transition bringing back the lighter dance-like character and the 7/8 meter of the first movement. This section also explores the techniques of the gadulka fiddling sound which was used in the beginning of the piece. Unlike in the first movement, here the melodic line is more disjunct and covers a bigger range of the instrument, with frequent register changes and ornaments adding more virtuosic features to it.

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