

***HINDEMITH
VIOLA PROJECT***

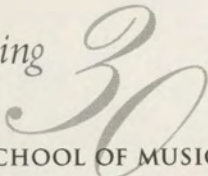
CONCERT III

***featuring the viola students of
The Shepherd School of Music***

Thursday, March 9, 2006

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

Celebrating  *1975-2005*
Years

THE SHEPHERD SCHOOL OF MUSIC RICE UNIVERSITY

*The Hindemith Viola Project brings together fifteen viola students from the combined studios of Karen Ritscher and James Dunham to perform this unique series of concerts featuring music for the viola by the eminent German composer and violist Paul Hindemith. These students have devoted much of the school year to learning and rehearsing this music in preparation for these concerts, and they participated in a series of all-Hindemith studio classes. Hindemith was a prolific composer in all genres, and his numerous works for the viola occupy a significant portion of the repertoire for the instrument. Hindemith's four **Solo Sonatas** and three **Sonatas for Viola and Piano** are presented on Tuesday and Thursday in a complete cycle that will demonstrate the virtuosic and sonorous qualities of the viola. These sonatas, composed between 1919 and 1939, are written in a variety of styles that reflect Hindemith's different influences and compositional phases. In addition, two chamber concertos are performed on Wednesday with orchestra: **Kammermusik No. 5** and **Trauermusik**. All of these works were written for Hindemith's own performance, and due to his intimate knowledge of the viola, they challenge the technique and skill of the violist in new and innovative ways. It is our hope that throughout the week, this project will not only showcase the talents and achievements of the violists at the Shepherd School, but also promote Paul Hindemith, who many consider to be the greatest and most creative violist-composer of all time.*

PROGRAM

Meditation for Viola and Piano

(Sehr langsam)

Paul Hindemith

(1895-1963)

Nicholas Mauro, viola

Neal Kurz, piano

Sonata for Solo Viola, Op. 31 No. 4

Äußerst lebhaft

Lied - Ruhig, mit wenig Ausdruck

Thema mit Variationen: Schnelle Viertel -

Langsam - Ziemlich lebhaft

John T. Posadas, viola

INTERMISSION

Sonata for Solo Viola (1937)

Lebhafte Halbe

Langsame Viertel - Lebhaft (pizzicato)

Mäßig schnelle Viertel

Kristina Hendricks, viola

Sonata for Viola and Piano (1939)

Breit, mit Kraft

Sehr lebhaft

Phantasie

Finale

Meredith Harris, viola (mvt. 1, 4)

Whitney Bullock, viola (mvt. 2, 3)

Charles Tauber, piano

PAUL HINDEMITH

The term "Renaissance Man" only begins to describe Paul Hindemith (1895-1963). During his lifetime he was known as a composer, soloist (mostly viola, but he also knew how to play thirteen other instruments), chamber musician, music educator, theoretician, artist, conductor, humorist, new music promoter, and author. Today Hindemith's legacy lies mostly in the enormous body of works he composed, but his other accomplishments in the fields of music theory, early music, and music education have impacted the musical lives of musicians throughout the United States, Europe, and the Middle East.

This festival will focus solely on one important facet of his life—the viola. Hindemith was an accomplished violist performing both as a soloist and chamber musician for most of his career. Of his thirty-one instrumental sonatas, there are more written for the viola than any other individual instrument. Similarly, four of his nineteen concertos are for viola because for much of the period between World War I and World War II he was in demand as a soloist throughout Europe. Hindemith was so well respected by his colleagues that he was often asked to premiere their works, the most famous being William Walton's *Viola Concerto*.

Hindemith was born in Hanau, Germany, in 1895 and began music lessons on the violin and piano at an early age. In 1908 he enrolled at the prestigious Hoch Conservatory and played violin in the Frankfurt Opera Orchestra until he was drafted for war service in 1917. Hindemith devoted the years following World War I to chamber music, founding his own quartet, the *Amar Quartet* (with Hindemith as the violist), to perform new compositions including many of his own works. He was teaching composition in Berlin by the time the Nazis rose to power, but their dislike for his early scandalous operas caused his music to be banned throughout Germany. The censorship of the Nazis eventually drove him out of Germany, first to Switzerland and later to the United States where he taught composition at Yale University.

Hindemith's compositions fall into three main phases. The first, from 1916-1919, is a mixture of neo-Romantic and other eclectic styles. During the 1920s Hindemith's compositions reacted to the new technological advances and the horror their invention had brought during World War I. This music is often referred to as non-Romantic, mechanistic, motoric, absurdist, or Dadaist. The final phase lasting from about 1930 to his death in 1963 is generally classified as neo-Baroque. By 1937 Hindemith had worked out a new set of compositional principles that, while firmly based on tonality, explored revolutionary new tonal relationships. He set down these principles in his book *The Craft of Musical Composition*, and from that point forward he did not vary his compositional style.

Although Hindemith eventually became an American citizen, he was never particularly at home in his adopted country. After about ten years at Yale, he returned to Switzerland to teach at the University of Zurich. Hindemith spent the last years of his life composing and conducting orchestras throughout the world.



RICE