

“La Viola” Shelly Tramposh, viola

Prelude, Allegro, and Pastorale for Bb Clarinet
and Viola (1941)

Rebecca Clarke
(1886–1979)

Julianne Kirk-Doyle, clarinet

In Such a Night for two Violas and CD (2010)

Libby Larsen
(b. 1950)

Laura Matthews, viola

Four Poems for Robin for Soprano and Viola (2004)

Andrea Reinkemeyer
(b. 1976)

Colleen Skull, soprano

Duo for Oboe and Viola (1981)

Hilary Tann
(b. 1947)

Anna Hendrickson, oboe

Dumka (c. 1940)

Rebecca Clarke
(1886–1979)

Liesl Schoenberger Doty, violin
Tracy Lipke-Perry, piano

Sonata for Viola and Piano (1990)

Jennifer Higdon

Calmly
Declamatory

Tracy Lipke-Perry, piano

Program Notes

Rebecca Clarke’s *Prelude, Allegro, and Pastorale* was written in 1941, when Rebecca Clarke was staying in the United States with her brothers’ families. She submitted the work to the 1942 Festival for the International Society for Contemporary Music, which chose it for performance. Hers was the only piece of 33 chosen works that was composed by a woman. Clarke described the piece this way, after a request for information from the organizers:

The whole thing is very unpretentious: a short unassuming little prelude; an Allegro which I originally thought of calling a Toccata – as it gives both the players plenty of chance to show what they can do... The subject is more or less “mirror-writing” and in the coda the instruments are, in addition, continually crossing one another. There is a long fugato section in the middle of the movement, after a second subject in pizzicato chords on the viola. The whole of the second movement should sound very spirited, and is, I think, quite effectively written for both parts.

The third movement *Pastorale* is rather melancholy and nostalgic, ending in a very subdued way. The pieces, by the way, though designed to be played together, can all three be played as separate numbers, if so desired. If you see the artists who will play them at the Festival will you kindly tell them that they are to be taken quite freely. I have under-marked them rather than over-marked them, and there will be several places – notably in the Allegro where it will be natural to make a slight stringendo, and so on.¹

In Such a Night, a viola duet with actor/actress, is inspired by Act V, Scene 1, from William Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*. Lorenzo and Portia speak of the night, the wind, and echoes of legendary love. In my composition, I ask the violists to be both Lorenzo and Portia and the night itself. Using a pulse of quarter note = fifty-eight, I set about to create this scene by working with delicate coloring in the violas to create the idea of boundless night, soft wind, shadow and light. Within this setting, the two violas deliver rich, lyric lines, as if speaking from the souls of the two characters. The score can be performed with either live or recorded voice. – Libby Larsen

Four Poems for Robin was commissioned by, and is dedicated to Kathryn Hallor, soprano. The text, chosen by Ms. Hallor for the commission, is full of imagery about lost love, the Oregon landscape, and Japanese literature. In this setting, the viola represents the narrator who looks back over the years and contemplates the loss of his first love (soprano). These pieces also mark a transition in my life that was full of regret, *natsugashi*, and excitement about beginning anew. – Andrea Reinkemeyer

¹“Meeting of altos” by Liane Curtis. Published in *The Strad*, 1999.

The *Duo* [for Oboe and Viola] was written in 1981 in response to a request from violist David Sills. It is the only piece of mine without a title having something to do with nature although natural imagery underlies much of the writing. The timbres of the oboe and the viola are similar in many respects and I became fascinated by the idea of a single line being shaped by two instruments. At the opening, the viola “courts” the oboe, encouraging its moves and framing its melodies. A short viola cadenza leads from this reflective dialog to the pairing of the central section, after which an octave unison passage ushers in the fanfare-like conclusion.

– Hilary Tann

Rebecca Clarke wrote the *Dumka* sometime around 1941. The Rebecca Clarke society writes: “The *Dumka* (?1941), with its unusual scoring for violin, viola, and piano, was probably written for Clarke and family members to play. It not only employs the 3 + 3 + 2 rhythms used in Dvorak’s trio of the same name, but also incorporates other gestures reminiscent of Eastern European folk music. Clarke was both familiar with Bartok’s music and editing a book on Martinu at the time of its composition.” An interesting feature of the piece is the different meters in the central section, where Clarke asks the violin and viola to play in 3/4 while the piano plays in 2/4.

Jennifer Higdon writes of the *Sonata for Viola and Piano*, “This piece was written as a conventional work in that its harmonies come out of the tonal tradition. It was written with the traditions of other viola sonatas in mind (Hindemith, Clarke) and was undoubtedly influenced by some of the flute music that I have played (Prokofiev Sonata & Copland Duo).” Jennifer Higdon’s writing, like Hindemith’s, is very rhythmic, asking the players to navigate rapidly shifting rhythms, overlaying duple and triple rhythms, and frequently changing tempos. Higdon said in an interview that it was the first sonata she ever wrote.

Four Poems for Robin, copyright 1968
Gary Snyder (b. 1930)

Siwashing it out once in Siuslaw Forest
I slept under rhododendron
All night blossoms fell
Shivering on a sheet of cardboard
Feet stuck in my pack
Hands deep in my pockets
Barely able to sleep.
I remembered when we were in school
Sleeping together in a big warm bed
We were the youngest lovers
When we broke up we were still nineteen.
Now our friends are married
You teach school back east
I don’t mind living this way
Green hills the long blue beach
But sometimes sleeping in the open
I think back when I had you.

A spring night in Shokoku-ji
Eight years ago this May
We walked under cherry blossoms
At night in an orchard in Oregon.
All that I wanted then
Is forgotten now, but you.
Here in the night
In a garden of the old capital
I feel the trembling ghost of Yugao
I remember your cool body
Naked under a summer cotton dress.

An autumn morning in Shokoku-ji
Last night watching the Pleiades,
Breath smoking in the moonlight,
Bitter memory like vomit
Choked my throat.
I unrolled a sleeping bag
On mats on the porch
Under thick autumn stars.
In dream you appeared
(Three times in nine years)
Wild, cold, and accusing.
I woke shamed and angry:
The pointless wars of the heart.
Alost dawn. Venus and Jupiter.
The first time I have
Ever seen them close.

December at Yase

You said, that October,
In the tall dry grass by the orchard
When you chose to be free,
Again someday, maybe ten years.

After college I saw you
One time. You were strange.
And I was obsessed with a plan.
Now ten years and more have
Gone by: I've always known
 where you were –
I might have gone to you
Hoping to win your love back.
You are still single.

I didn't
I thought I just make it alone. I
Have done that.

Only in dream, like this dawn,
Does the grave, awed intensity
Of our young love
Return to my mind, to my flesh.

We had what the others
All crave and seek for;
We left it behind at nineteen.

I feel ancient, as though I had
Lived many lives.

And may never now know
If I am a fool
Or have done what my
 karma demands.

A few notes about the text: Siuslaw Forest is located on the Oregon coast, just west of Eugene. Siwashing is camping with light equipment. Shokoku-ji is a 14th-century Zen monastery in Kyoto, Japan; Yase is northeast of Kyoto. The story of Yugao is found in an ancient Japanese manuscript about Prince Genji; she died suddenly during their affair. The Pleiades are a group of stars that are found in the Taurus Constellation.