

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE PRESENTS

VIRTUOSO SERIES CONCERT

**MARGARET MILLER, VIOLA** AND **TIM BURNS, PIANO**

**SOMETHING  
OLD,  
SOMETHING  
NEW**

**SEPTEMBER 23, 2024 | 7:30 P.M.**  
**ORGAN RECITAL HALL**



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**VIRTUOSO SERIES**  
**Margaret Miller, viola**  
**Tim Burns, piano**

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2024, 7:30 P.M. | ORGAN RECITAL HALL

*Romance for Viola and Piano*

**Ralph Vaughn Williams (1872-1958)**

*Varsha (Rain) 2019*

**Reena Esmail (b. 1983)**

*Take What You Need (2016)*

**INTERMISSION**

*Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 11 no. 4*

**Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)**

I. Fantasie-II. Thema mit Variationen-III. Finale (mit Variationen)

## **PROGRAM NOTES**

### ***Romance for Viola and Piano***

#### **Ralph Vaughn Williams (1872-1958)**

There is no information about the approximate date on which this work was written. The manuscript was discovered with others, without any clue, among the composer's papers after his death. All that can be said is that it was probably intended for the great virtuoso Lionel Tertis, for whom Vaughn Williams had composed his two major works for viola-*Flos Campi* in 1925 and the Suite in 1934.

— notes by Bernard Shore, who gave the first performance in 1962 with pianist Eric Gritton.

### ***Varsha (Rain) 2019***

#### ***Take What You Need (2016)***

#### **Reena Esmail (b. 1983)**

Indian-American composer Reena Esmail works between the worlds of Indian and Western classical music and brings communities together through the creation of equitable musical spaces.

Esmail's life and music was profiled on Season 3 of PBS Great Performances series *Now Hear This*, as well as *Frame of Mind*, a podcast from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Esmail divides her attention evenly between orchestral, chamber and choral work. She has written commissions for ensembles including the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Seattle Symphony, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and Kronos Quartet, and her music has featured on multiple Grammy-nominated albums, including *The Singing Guitar* by Conspirare, *BRUITS* by Imani Winds, and *Healing Modes* by Brooklyn Rider. Many of her choral works are published by Oxford University Press.

Esmail is the Los Angeles Master Chorale's 2020-2025 Swan Family Artist in Residence and was Seattle Symphony's 2020-21 Composer-in-Residence. She has been in residence with Tanglewood Music Center (co-Curator – 2023) and Spoleto Festival (Chamber Music Composer-in-Residence – 2024) inShe also holds awards/fellowships from United States Artists, the S&R Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Kennedy Center.

Esmail holds degrees in composition from The Juilliard School (BM'05) and the Yale School of Music (MM'11, MMA'14, DMA'18). Her primary teachers have included Susan Botti, Aaron Jay Kernis, Christopher Theofanidis, Christopher Rouse and Samuel Adler. She received a Fulbright-Nehru grant to study Hindustani music in India. Her Hindustani music teachers include Srimati Lakshmi Shankar and Gaurav Mazumdar, and she currently studies and collaborates with Saili Oak. Her doctoral thesis, entitled *Finding Common Ground: Uniting Practices in Hindustani and Western Art Musicians* explores the methods and challenges of the collaborative process between Hindustani musicians and Western composers.

Esmail was Composer-in-Residence for Street Symphony (2016-18) and is currently an Artistic Director of Shastra, a non-profit organization that promotes cross-cultural music connecting music traditions of India and the West.

She currently resides in her hometown of Los Angeles, California.

**Varsha** was written for the *Haydn Seven Last Words* project, for Juilliard415. The project commissioned seven composers (including Nico Muhly, Paola Prestini, Jessica Meyer, Tania Leon, Caroline Shaw and Colin Jacobsen) to write interludes between each of the Haydn quartets.

This piece, *Varsha*, serves as an interlude between Sonata V (*Sitio* – “I Thirst”) and Sonata VI (*Consummatum Est* – “It is finished”) of *Haydn’s Seven Last Words*. The combination of Hindustani *raags* used in this piece are from the Malhaar family, which are sung to beckon rain.

I imagined an interlude between these two sonatas: Christ thirsts. Rain comes from the distance (Megh Malhaar). There is a downpour around him (Miyan ki Malhaar), but he grows slowly weaker. His next words make clear that even the rain is not enough: his thirst is of another sort, which cannot be quenched by water. And so, it is finished.

Of the many performances of **Take What You Need**, very few of them have been in traditional concert halls. Most performances have taken place in jails, homeless shelters, support groups, schools, memorial services, places of worship — in places where people can gather to see and honor the humanity in one another.

*Take What You Need* was first written for Urban Voices Project, a choir made up of people who are experiencing or have recently experienced homelessness — so many of whom have trusted this piece with their own stories of loss and redemption, and who I am so honored to count among my dearest friends. But this piece is also meant to be a resource for musicians and communities to come together and build the lasting relationships that plant seeds for social change.

Note: this work can also be performed with a narrator. Here is the text:

Take a moment

Take a breath

Take time

Take care

Take heart

Take hope

Take a step

Take a chance

Take courage

Take charge

Take a stand

Take pride

Take joy

Take pause

Take a moment

Take a breath

Take what you need

Though not without original touches, this graceful and amiable sonata is one of few works which hints at the source of Hindemith's style in the sound-world of Brahms and even Dvorák. There is also a Franco-Russian strain, perhaps heightened by a study of Debussy (whom his wartime commanding officer had especially admired). Little in the sonata's musical language would have caused surprise in the 1890s, though few pieces of that era modulate so freely. The rather unusual form, with a short introductory movement, a theme and variations, and a finale that interrupts the variation-sequence only to resume it later, suggests the genre of fantasy-sonata cultivated by some of the Romantic composers.

The first movement's lulling initial melody might almost be by Brahms, though the chromatic harmonization of its counter-statement points to César Franck. A cadenza-like passage leads into the variation movement, whose folk-song-flavoured theme is rather redolent of the Russian nationalist school (Borodin, say, filtered through Debussy). The ensuing four variations are more individual, however, with the part-writing turning increasingly into real polyphony.

The finale disrupts the process: it resembles a self-contained sonata-form movement with two contrasting ideas—the first assertive, with a prominent three-note rhythmic figure, and the second a gentle, lullaby-like tune, one of the most frankly Romantic melodies in Hindemith's entire output. After an extended development, however, the sequence of variations begun in the previous movement resumes with a final group of three: one gently flowing, a livelier fugato, and a coda where the folk-song-like theme has the last word.

— from notes by Malcolm MacDonald © 2009

Violist **MARGARET MILLER** enjoys a varied career of teaching and performing as a faculty member at Colorado State University. Prior to joining the CSU faculty in 2004, Ms. Miller was violist of the Da Vinci Quartet for eighteen years; during that time the Quartet toured throughout the US and recorded three CDs for the Naxos American Classics label. The Da Vinci Quartet was a prize winner in the Naumburg and Shostakovich Competitions and their program Heartstrings was featured on a segment of the PBS NewsHour. She is coordinator of the Graduate Quartet Program at Colorado State University and is a founding faculty member of the LEAP Institute for the Arts.

An active performer and teacher, she has given recitals and master classes at Kansas State University, the University of Iowa, the University of Nevada-Reno, Arizona State University, University of Arizona, the University of New Mexico, University of Missouri, and the University of Wyoming. She is active in state organizations, giving clinics at conferences for the Colorado Music Educators Association, the Colorado American String Teachers Association, the Colorado State Music Teachers Association, and the Wyoming Music Educators Conference. She has collaborated with the Borromeo String Quartet, the Fine Arts Quartet, and the Mendelssohn Trio.

A native of Detroit, Ms. Miller attended Indiana University and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where she studied with the Fine Arts Quartet. Her students have gone to prestigious graduate programs, as well as thriving educators and chamber musicians.

Ms. Miller has been honored for her teaching by the Colorado chapter of the American String Teachers Association and the Colorado Springs Youth Symphony Association. She plays a viola made in 1990 by California maker Thomas Croen.

Pianist **TIMOTHY BURNS** is a versatile performer and collaborator, with significant instrumental, vocal, and choral accompanying experience. He holds degrees in piano performance, music theory pedagogy, and collaborative piano from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, studying with Carol Schanely-Cahn, David Allen Wehr, and Jean Barr. Currently, Dr. Burns serves as supervisor of piano accompanying and coordinator of piano proficiency at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, where he frequently collaborates with faculty, guest artists, and students.

Dr. Burns has performed throughout the United States and Canada. He has served as staff accompanist for the 2010 King Award Competition, the 2012 International Viola Congress, the 2013 International Society of Bassists Competition and Conference, the 2017 and 2019 International Horn Competition of America, and the 2019 International Keyboard Odysiad, U.S.A. Recent performances include concert tours with saxophonist Peter Sommer, with clarinetist Wesley Ferreira, and as trio member with violinist John Michael Vaida and cellist Theodore Buchholz. Other major performances include the world premiere of James David's *Swing Landscapes* (2018) for Piano and Wind Orchestra, duo performances with clarinetist Wesley Ferreira at the 2016 ClarinetFest International Conference, and a 2015 chamber music performance on the Frick Collection's "Salon Evening" concert series in New York City with members of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra.

As an avid supporter for new and current music, Dr. Burns has performed works by current composers such as Mari Esabel Valverde, Margaret Brouwer, Mathjis van Dijk, Baljinder Sekhon, and James M. David. Past summer residences have included the New York State Summer School of the Arts Choral Studies Program in Fredonia, New York, the Performing Arts Institute at the Wyoming Seminary near Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, the Eastman School of Music's "Summer@Eastman" program in Rochester, New York, the Lift Clarinet Academy in Fort Collins, Colorado, and the Just Chamber Music program in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Dr. Burns currently resides in Broomfield, Colorado with his wife and collaborative pianist, Suyeon Kim, and his four-year old son, Stephen.

UNIVERSITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Conducted by

**RACHEL WADDELL**

Guest Artist / Viola

**MARGARET MILLER**

The  
**Uncommon  
WOMAN**

*Joan Tower's Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman # 1*

*Johannes Brahms' Academic Festival Overture*

*Paul Hindemith's Der Schwanendreher*

*and Emilie Mayer's lyrical Symphony No. 2*

**October 10, 2024 | 7:30 p.m.**  
**Griffin Concert Hall**



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