

Occidental College Music Department  
*Junior Recital*



**Hyun Gill**

viola

piano accompaniment provided by  
Galina Barskaya

**Sunday, March 28, 2021**

**4:00 PM**

**Online**

## PROGRAM

Der Schwanendreher

Paul Hindemith  
(1895-1963)

Viola Sonata No. 1 in F minor, Op. 120 No. 1

Johannes Brahms  
(1833-1897)

## PROGRAM NOTES

### Paul Hindemith

#### ***Der Schwanendreher* 1st movement, “Zwischen Berg und tiefem Tal”**

Paul Hindemith was born in Germany to a family that struggled financially. He began playing the violin to support the family's income, then played the viola and eventually started composing in 1913. Not favored by the Nazi government due to the dissonant style of his earlier music, Hindemith prepared to emigrate. He announced his plan through his compositions, including *Der Schwanendreher*, which was premiered by Hindemith himself in 1935, two years after the National Socialists were brought to power. The notes in the score of *Der Schwanendreher* (“The Swan Turner”) suggest that the title refers to a musician who travels and plays the hurdy-gurdy, an instrument that has a handle shaped like the neck of a swan. In addition to alluding to a traveling musician, Hindemith titled the three movements after German folk songs: “Zwischen Berg und tiefem Tal” (Between mountain and deep valley), “Nun laube, Lindlein laube” (Now grow leaves, little linden tree, grow leaves), and “Seid ihr nicht der Schwanendreher” (Are you not the swan turner?), which all hint at a new beginning, showing that he is planning to emigrate from Germany.

The first movement begins with a melancholic viola solo that suggests the loneliness in a journeying to a new beginning. In the orchestral

score, Hindemith omits the violin and viola parts of the accompaniment to emphasize the solo violist. After the movement becomes more intense and rhythmically diverse, the viola solo returns, now ending in C major— an unexpected turn at the end of this non-tonal piece.

## **Johannes Brahms**

### **Viola Sonata No. 1 in F minor, Op. 120 No. 1**

Johannes Brahms was born into a musical family and was trained in piano, cello, and French horn, becoming a professional musician when still a teenager. With Mozart and Beethoven as his role models, Brahms composed much chamber music. Visiting Meiningen in 1891, he heard Richard Mühlfeld, the principal clarinetist of the Meiningen court orchestra, play Weber's Clarinet Concerto No.1. Impressed, Brahms composed two clarinet sonatas, and soon created viola versions of them because of his love of the viola's warm and rich sound. This sonata was one of the last works he composed before his death.

The sonata takes the listener on a journey full of emotions. It begins with an expressive and strong *Allegro appassionato*. Listen for the assertive beginning motif, which repeats several times in the movement. The movement ends with a calm and reflective *Sostenuto ed espressivo*, again accompanied by the opening motif. The second movement preserves this calm atmosphere before giving way to the light-hearted and dance-like third movement, which hints at the first movement in its minor section. The last movement, marked *Vivace* and in F major, retains the third's bright atmosphere. The emotional gulf between the sonata's beginning and end is bridged by the sonata's consistently assertive character, which guides the audience in its listening journey.