

## VivaViola Album Notes

*“Have the patience with all that is unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves, like closed rooms, like books written in a foreign language.”*

*- Rainer Maria Rilke*

All my life I have lived with the question: why the viola? When I began at age ten it was simply a way to help our school orchestra, at age 16 it was to fall in love feverishly with quartets of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven while falling in love with lifelong friends. In my 30s and 40s, I was in the midst of raising a family alongside raising young violists. Now at age 50, I feel ever more like a student, a kind of archeologist of my own life, looking both inward and forward. My desire is to use the viola as a storyteller, a bridge to connect people and cultures, a medium to serve music as medicine.

Violists are forever searching for more music in the Classical and Romantic genres. One silver lining of the pandemic period was being able to explore repertoire which I hope can become tomorrow's viola classics. Erich Korngold's *Much Ado About Nothing* provides a guilty pleasure in the best possible sense. Berg's *Four Pieces*, opus 5, were beautifully arranged by the late Roger Tapping, providing an exquisite stepping stone for students to explore more significant Second Viennese School chamber music. The Dvorak Folk tone reveals viola's secret weapon: the ability to yearn and cry as a human voice. And of course the Beethoven Cello Sonata, opus 102 no. 2, needs no reasons or excuses. It is Beethoven!

I am particularly grateful to Taiwanese violist Meng-Hsun Chuang for his brilliant arrangement of the Korngold. It is the beginning of a wealth of repertoire that showcases the viola's versatile voice. From guttural growls to soaring gestures, its unique timbre expresses what words cannot.

VivaViola's mission is, first and foremost to celebrate humanity through the viola. Our arrangements allow viola ensembles to serve music spiritually to the homeless via Community Table. Each chapter under the VivaViola umbrella hopes to **bridge the disconnect** — humans to nature, East to West, individuals to society. In the most collaborative spirit, VivaViola exists thanks to The Foundation of Chinese Performing Art for their unwavering support, Pheno Records for making this dream into a reality and the global viola community for its continuous inspiration.

Hsin-Yun Huang, 2023