



Paul Hindemith

Sonate

für Bratsche und Klavier
für Viola and Piano

(1939)

nach / based on
Paul Hindemith
Sämtliche Werke Band V/7
Complete Works Volume V/7

Herausgegeben von / Edited by
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PREVIEW
Low Resolution

zweimal – da kann man selbst das allerschönste Stück endlich überbekommen. Die Aufnahmen sollten aber eigentlich gut geworden sein, denn wir haben uns große Mühe gegeben. Nachher waren wir auch entsprechend abgekämpft. Über den Zeitdruck, unter dem die Bratschensonate entstanden ist, gibt auch Hindemiths Brief an AMP vom 8. November 1939 Aufschluss: Die Bratschensonate, die ich in den verschiedenen Schlafwagen der NYC, UP, Santa Fe etc etc angefertigt habe, ist eben bei Schott in Arbeit. – Was ist eigentlich aus den Victor-Aufnahmen geworden? Ich habe nichts mehr von dort gehört. Eine für den 2. Dezember 1939 geplante Aufführung der Bratschensonate in Amsterdam fand wegen der politischen Ereignisse nicht statt. Offiziell wurde das Konzert wegen „Erkrankung“ Hindemiths abgesagt (Brief Hindemiths an Willy Strecker vom 29. November 1939). Schott nahm den Druck des Werkes trotz der schwierigen Zwangs-Angriff: Am 23. November sandte der Verlag Hindemith den ersten Satz zur Korrektur. Hindemith schickte weitere Korrekturen an, die am 16. Januar 1940 abgeschickt wurden und am 20. Januar 1940 in der Druckerei in Wallis (Schweiz) eintrafen. Am 2. März schrieb Hindemith, der inzwischen in die USA ausgewandert war, an Willy Strecker: Ich hoffe, daß auf irgendeine Weise Exemplare von all den neuen Sonaten (Hindemith hat insgesamt eines von jeder! [...]) 4händige Sonate ist auf Platten herausgekommen (Schott 1940) feinsten Schall, wie ich es selbst bei der Bratschensonate mit Klavier, die Du gerade geschickt hast. Schwanendreher konnte ich nicht spielen, das Instrumentenspiel war Hindemith allerdings wenig begeistert: ... aber ich habe das Besondere daran, daß es sich so leicht an den Nagel zu hängen. Wenn sie nicht schöner ist als das, was man vom Grammophon hören kann, ist es nicht mehr wert, gezeigt zu werden (Brief an Gertrud Hindemith vom 7. März 1940). Gertrud hat sich diesem Entschluss allerdings nicht gehalten,³ doch war ihm gerade während des Krieges bewusst, daß er sich nicht mehr so oft als Solist auftrat, ganz offen geäußert: Ja, was ich, da mich das Instrument so sehr an das habe ich nie besonders gerne getan.⁴

Die von Hindemith selbst für die verschiedenen Aufführungen und die Schallplattenaufnahme benutzte autografe Bratschenstimme enthält eigenhändige Fingersätze, die eindeutig zeigen, daß Hindemiths Werk oft unmittelbar aus dem Instrumentalspiel entstanden ist. Dem Quartett bzw. Quintett blieb die Wahl der Fingersätze offenbar grundsätzlich freigestellt. Dies geht aus einem Brief von Hindemith an den von Grigorij Litigorsky 1940 uraufgeführten Cellokonzert an Karl Blumhagen (AMP 1940) hervor: Die Fingersätze von Litigorsky in der Cellostimme sind nicht nötig [...] und jeder soll sie nach seinen Fähigkeiten wählen (Hindemith 1940, S. 142).

Dorothea Baumann

³ Vgl. Dietrich Bauer, *Paul Hindemith als Bratschist*, in: Hindemith-Jahrbuch 1977/VI, S. 142–147.

⁴ M. Hohenlohe, *Hindemith besucht Deutschland*, in: *Melos* 17 (1950), S. 221.

⁵ Brief vom März 1941.

Preface

The history of the composition of this Viola Sonata reflects the course of Hindemith's travel over the winter of 1938/39. The fact that it was completed at all was due to Hindemith's ability to write music while travelling, especially on trains. Early drafts and a fair copy of the first movement were written in July 1938 in Chandolin (in the Swiss canton of Valais) where Hindemith also wrote the third movement of his Quartet for clarinet, violin, cello and piano, the Oboe Sonata and the second movement of his Bassoon Sonata. The first performance of the Viola Sonata, originally planned for January 1939 in Lausanne, could not take place on that date because it was not finished yet. Hindemith's first performance of the work on his third visit to America, in New York Town Hall on 23 April 1939, was with Jesús María Sanromá¹; he also agreed to arrangements for a recording of the sonata. Hindemith was obliged to finish the composition of the work during his tour of America. This is documented by notes written on the movements (2nd movement: 1st/2nd April 39 Los Angeles, 3rd movement: 1st April 39 New York, 4th movement 13th April 39 Boston), but also by a letter Hindemith wrote to his wife on 19 April 1939 in New York on Saturday I spent the whole afternoon in the hotel working on the Viola Sonata. The work is now worryingly close. [...] On Easter Sunday I worked from early in the morning until about noon. [...] The sonata is thus approaching completion. [...] All day Monday was spent working with the manuscript for another performance of the previous day's concert – and so things are progressing steadily. [...] On Tuesday I went out of that wretched Viola Sonata. Yesterday morning I still had to spend the morning writing it out. [...] The nagging burden, except for the solo part, which I will have to write out tomorrow, is now over the next few days (the Viola Sonata and the [piano] Sonata for four hands) for the [concert] in New York on the 21st. The rest of the story was told from the 'President Roosevelt' which I took to Europe on 26 April to 6 May: Boston [...] Having finished the wretched Viola Sonata, I went off to New York to be photographed [...]. I still had to write out the fairly substantial viola part, which I did on Sunday. [...] Had it not been for constant interruptions, Sunday's afternoon would have been devoted to the viola part. [...] I wrote the last note of the Viola Sonata. [...] In the afternoon I wrote out the viola part and we rehearsed the sonata very thoroughly almost before the ink was dry. [...] The sonata is a powerful, robust piece with a high substance content. The second movement has a tricky rhythm that needs to be approached with care. [...] In preparation for the last movement, which consists of two variations over a fully fledged sonata form, I imagined a swarm of fleas. [...] On Tuesday 20th Hindemith attempted to rehearse the Viola Sonata and the Piano Sonata for four hands with the pianist Louis Hoffmann-Berendt² for an additional concert at Harvard University in Cambridge. [...] While we were spending time trying to rehearse the viola sonata, I gave up. We decided to go to New York. [...] On Wednesday 21st I was at reading and playing to get to grips with the piece like Sanromá. The pianist Louis Hoffmann-Berendt was playing the piano in the Sonata for four hands and Sanromá playing the Viola. [...] I was relieved with Sanromá again on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon. Then: the recording session. [...] It went well. We began with the Viola Sonata and acquitted ourselves very well. [...] On Thursday: Travelled to New York. Friday 21st: Straight after lunch we are due to record it this evening. He is finding it strangely difficult to get to grips with it, which is rather an odd thing. [...] And then there was all the business of the recording session. [...] Next day a three-hour recording session for Hindemith's *Truermusik* for solo viola and piano. [...] We started with the Viola Sonata and the Sonata for four hands. We started with the piano duet, but when Sanromá was tired, we weren't exactly together and the recording session didn't go as well it had. [...] After several attempts we gave up and I went for a drink at the Blue Ribbon with Sanromá and my friend [...] On Saturday 24th (rehearsal with Sanromá [...]) was quite hard going. We discovered that we couldn't really play the Viola Sonata although we had already performed it once in Cambridge – and spent over three hours working on it intensively, [...] It came together. [...] Rehearsal in the Town Hall [...] In the evening there was the concert [the first performance of the work]. On Monday 24th: very pressurised, fussing over the recording again. I worked and wrestled away with Sanromá all afternoon until almost midnight: first the Sonata for four hands, then the Viola Sonata. Practice, test recordings, real recordings. Having to record everything twice – even the loveliest piece can get a bit much like that. The recordings should have turned out well, though, for we went to a lot of trouble. We were pretty worn out at the end of it all. Hindemith's

¹ Jesús Mari Sanromá (7 November 1902 - 12 October 1984) studied in Boston, Paris (with Cortot) and Berlin (with Schnabel), was pianist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra 1926-44 and gave the first performances of several of Hindemith's works (Flute Sonata, Cor Anglais Sonata, Third Piano Sonata, Piano Concerto).

² Lydia Hoffmann-Behrendt (3 September 1890 – 15 February 1971), an American pianist of Russian descent, made her debut in 1911 after studying in Berlin and Vienna and went on to specialise in performing modern music. She moved to New York in 1934 and taught at the College of Music there.

letter to AMP dated 8 November 1939 tells of the time pressure under which the Viola Sonata was written: *The Viola Sonata, which I wrote in various sleeper cars in NYC, UP, Santa Fe etc. etc. is being prepared for publication by Schott. – What has become of the Victor recordings? I haven't heard any more from them. A performance of the Viola Sonata scheduled to take place in Amsterdam on 2 December 1939 did not take place because of political developments. The concert was officially cancelled due to Hindemith's 'illness' (letter from Hindemith to Willi Strecker dated 29 November 1939). Schott started preparing to publish the work, despite the difficult circumstances. On 23 November the publishers sent Hindemith the first movement for proof reading, informing him on 13 December that further proofs were to follow: these were sent out on 16 January 1940 and reached Hindemith on 20 January 1940 in Basel (Switzerland). On 2 March Hindemith, who by then had emigrated to the USA, wrote Willi Strecker: 'I hope copies of all the new sonatas will get here somehow, even if there is only one. The new Viola Sonata for four hands has been released on record (very nice!), as well as the Trauermusik [Funeral] march. I have also written a new viola sonata with piano, which you have just sent. The Schwanendrehier concerto is also being prepared. I was unenthusiastic about his own viola playing, though: ... I have indeed tried to give it a final, definitive, once and for all. If it doesn't sound any better than what comes out of the gramophone, I won't be giving any more (letter to Gertrud Hindemith, dated 7 March 1940). Hindemith didn't keep his promise, however, though it had evidently become clear to him during these recording sessions that his playing was not good enough. After the war, when people asked him in Germany why he didn't perform more often, he answered: 'I would have said quite openly: Well, you know, you have to do so much practice, and I've never had time.' The original manuscript of the viola part, which was used by Hindemith for his own performances and for the recording, contains his own fingerings – showing once again how Hindemith drew on the experience of playing the instrument. Hindemith clearly meant to give the children his own fingering in each performer, however. This is conveyed in a letter he wrote to Karl B. at Amsterdam: 'I have written the fingering of the Cello Concerto, performed for the first time in 1940 by Gregor Piatigorsky. I have written Piatigorsky's fingerings in the cello part [...] and each player should determine his own fingerings for the other parts'.*

German text by Dorothea Baumann
English translation Julia Rushworth

¹ See Dietrich Bauer, *Paul Hindemith als Bratschist*, in: *Hindemith-Jahrbuch* 1977/VI, p. 142-147

² M. Hohenlohe, *Hindemith besucht Deutschland in Melos* 17 (1950), p. 221

³ Letter dated March 1941

Sonate

Paul Hindemith
1895 – 1963

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12727

12737

12747

12757

12767

12777

12787

12797

12807

12817

12827

12837

12847

12857

12867

12877

12887

12897

12907

12917

12927

12937

12947

12957

12967

12977

12987

12997

13007

13017

13027

13037

13047

13057

13067

13077

13087

13097

13107

13117

13127

13137

13147

13157

13167

13177

13187

13197

13207

13217

13227

13237

13247

13257

13267

13277

13287

<

18 *p* *ff*

22 *f* *mf* *mp*

26 *f*

30 *mf*

34 *dim.* *p*

The musical score consists of two systems, each with a violin part (top staff) and a piano part (bottom staff). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first system covers measures 18 to 21. The piano part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a crescendo (*cresc.*) leading to fortissimo (*ff*). The violin part starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second system covers measures 22 to 31. Measure 22 is the start of a second ending, marked with a '2' in a box. Dynamics in the piano part include *f*, *mf*, and *mp*. The violin part has a forte (*f*) dynamic in measure 26. The system concludes with a decrescendo (*dim.*) and a piano (*p*) dynamic in measure 34.

Ruhig

32 *p* *sf*

36 *pp*

40 *f*

dim. *p*

2/4

2/4

The musical score is written for piano and features a large, diagonal watermark reading "PREVIEW Low Resolution". The score is divided into systems, with measures 32, 36, 40, and 44 marked. The tempo is marked "Ruhig". The dynamics range from *pp* (pianissimo) to *sf* (sforzando). The time signature changes from 3/4 to 2/4 at measure 44. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs.