

5 MINUTES WITH HSIN-YUN HUANG



PCMF: You studied here in the UK at the Menuhin School. Can you tell us a little about the years that you spent here, and how they impacted you as a musician?

H-Y H: *I was privileged to have spent 4 years in the late 1980's at the Menuhin School. My journey with music and viola had all been a bit of an accident; in looking back it is not possible to fully acknowledge the incredible generosity of so many inspiring mentors and friends. The three musical giants in my life from that time were David Takeno, Peter Norris and of course Yehudi Menuhin.*

Despite my late beginning on the viola (at a mature age of 10!) David Takeno gave me great string playing foundation through the most playful lessons. Peter Norris contemplated every decisions in music making and trained us into musicians that will be forever seeking. Yehudi Menuhin often shared life lessons through his own experiences. It was always authentic and humbling.

As for personal growth, I was thrown into a little United Nation with no language to communicate with. You might not believe me when I say that the entire first year I was totally mute! Then shockingly the first word out of my mouth was a swear word But it was invaluable to have the skills trying to integrate and wanting to be accepted as part of the community. Chamber music became the best way to make friends and the best way to share. So each day I feel enormously lucky that this is my life now. Sharing music with friends.

PCMF: Since leaving the UK, your career has taken you all over the world as an internationally acclaimed chamber musician and soloist. Can you tell us a little about some of your personal highlights, and forthcoming projects to watch out for?

H-Y H: *I am still not comfortable using the word "career" because I think I never dared even dreaming of such a thing. It's been a blessing to play the viola and be a musician that is the glue or the bridge between voices. It was always clear to me that pursuing solo viola was challenging because of the limited repertoire, at the same time I am passionately in love with Haydn, Beethoven, Bartok quartets and everything chamber music. However, when I am given a concerto opportunity, it is of course a great privilege to have the freedom to cultivate a more original voice and paint with bigger brushstrokes.*

Last season I was the first featured solo violist in National Center of Performing Arts in Beijing. That was thrilling. This season am returning to perform again with the NCPA orchestra and David Robertson. We will be working on the Schnittke Viola Concerto which is one of my absolute favorite. Other projects include building collaborations I hope can be viola centric and interesting. I am always curious to work with artists cross discipline or cross culture. For next season there are a couple of different recital programs. One involves a soprano and string quartet., one is an all solo program where I thread various movements spanning over 250 years based on the composer's love for C string of the viola. I call it FantaC.

PCMF: You are also a dedicated musical educator. Involving children in the Peasmarsh Festival via our education projects is central to the festival ethos. Do you have any tips for young audience members who may be listening to a classical concert for the first time?

H-Y H: *There is nothing more thrilling than working with young musicians who are passionate to learn and really love this art form. For ANYONE who is listening, whether first time or not, I'd say that close your eyes and deepen your listening experience. You will find a wealth of beauty and emotional response. We are only limited by our imaginations, not experiences.*