

13.07

CASA DA  
MÚSICA

**MĂDALINA MARIA  
ȘOGORESCU-HERDEȘ  
VIOLA D'ARCO**

FESTIVAL MIA





## PROGRAMA

**York Bowen** (22.02.1884 – 21.11.1961)

**Sonata n.º1 para viola e piano em dó menor Op. 18** (1905)

I *Allegro moderato*

II *Poco lento cantabile*

III *Finale, Presto*

**Sonata n.º 2 para viola e piano em fá maior Op. 22** (1906)

I *Allegro assai e semplice*

**Fantasia para viola e piano Op. 54**

Músicos intervenientes:

**João Lima**, piano





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## NOTAS DO PROGRAMA (INGLÊS)

Alongside Benjamin Dale and Arnold Bax, York Bowen was one of the 20th century English composers that dedicated a significant amount of their works to the viola, in a period of the history where the consecrated repertoire was quite reduced both in number of works and complexity of the pieces. One of the main reasons why viola gained more popularity throughout the 20th century was the debut of some great viola players, such as Lionel Tertis, considered to be the pioneer of the viola school of playing, William Primrose, Paul Hindemith or Walter Trampler.

Although Bowen had a significant contribution in the viola repertoire, he never received the recognition he deserved as a composer, mostly because he was considered 'too romantic' for that time, and refused to change his style, even though each of his works has a strong individual character. The expression used in his works, the beauty of the melodies, complemented with rich, colourful harmonies always surprised me and gave me the impression that the best word to describe Bowen's music - at least the works dedicated to the viola - would be '*phantasy*'. Around 15 of his opuses are called '*phantasy*', either for the free musical form or expression, many of them being works for viola or works that include viola such as: *Fantasia for Viola and Organ in F major* (1903); *Fantasia quartet for Four Violas, Op.41 No.1* (1907); *Phantasy Trio for Violin, Cello (or Viola) and Piano, Op.24*; *Phantasy in F major for Viola and Piano, Op.54* (1918); *Phantasy quintet for Bass Clarinet and String Quartet, Op.93* (1932) etc.

This recital is dedicated to a deeper understanding of the interpretation of York Bowen's viola repertoire, underlying the beauty of his music and the courage to compose in a way that might be considered 'oldfashioned' but still, inspires musicians to discover their own expression and not lose their values on the way.

### ***Viola sonata no. 1 in C minor Op. 18***

This sonata is the first large-scale work for viola ever written by Bowen, and had a big success from its premiere to this day, even though some critics did not receive it very well for the late romantic style, as well as the "*lack of understanding*" of the viola. Even so, most of the reaction for the sonata were very positive, highlighting the "great talent and skills" of the composer, as well as the "rational and musicianly manner" of developing the musical material.

The sonata has a standard structure (fast-slow-fast), with some small deviations, and lasts about 29 minutes. The first movement, *Allegro moderato* starts in C minor, moving to E-flat major as it reaches the second theme. The development section is characterized by the harmonic instability, rarely cadencing in a single key. The recapitulation has a Brahmsian signature, for the inversion of the end of the second theme, followed by completely new material, but finishing the movement with a brief reminiscence of the opening gesture at the end of the movement, another Brahmsian allusion. In the second movement, *Poco lento e cantabile* is very interesting to highlight the harmonic games that Bowen does under the beautiful melodies, also inspired by Brahms' harmonic genius, with some possible Debussian influence. The most explored procedures used during the whole movement are the mediant relationships and the seventh chords. The movement closes with a typical Brahmsian two against three rhythmic patterns between the two instruments. The last movement, *Finale* is written in a modified sonatarondo form, debuting with a recitative-like structure in C minor, introducing the first theme, also in C minor, echoing the first theme of the first movement. Throughout

the whole movement the cyclic use of the material along with the same old mediant-key relationships further affirm the Brahmsian and French influences of the entire piece. The fantasy-like development brings in new material, passing through various keys before the recapitulation brings us back to C minor for a while, before the second theme is stated in E-flat major, then repeated in C major. The Coda introduces a chromatic melody on the viola, doubled by the piano's left hand in octaves. This section reuses some secondary themes of the first two movements, showing once again the cyclic treatment of the material.

The entire sonata closes with rapid figurations punctuated with a final statement of the opening theme of the third movement.

### ***Viola sonata no. 2 in F Major Op. 22***

After the success of the first Sonata, Bowen composed a second one in the following year (1906), also premiered with his scene partner and friend, Lionel Tertis. The sonata received good feedback as well after the first performances, the real sense of beauty, the delicate melodies and the high level of performance.

The first movement, *Allegro assai*, starting with the first theme in F major, follows a standard sonata form, using the mediant keys technique as well as the first sonata, for the development of the material, especially in the development section. The viola material is quite challenging, but it falls well on the instrument, as evidence of Bowen's awareness of the instrument's characteristics.

### ***Phantasy for viola and piano Op. 54***

"The F major *Phantasy* was a Cobbett prize-winner in the year of its composition, 1918. Once again Bowen's typical arch-structure creates an extended single movement, with the *Poco adagio* slow section presenting the composer's big tune before the *Allegro vivo* of his vigorous finale, making a work that is comparable in scale to Bowen's sonatas in his viola output" (Lewis Foreman).

Like almost all of Bowen's works for viola, the *Phantasy* was dedicated to Lionel Tertis, showing once again what an amazing virtuoso he must have been in his era. The premiere took place on December 6th, 1918, played by Tertis and the pianist Samuel Liddle. The relative length of the *Phantasy* (around 14 minutes) is often compared to Bowen's other large-scale works, attracting various performers to explore his repertoire, since the commitment to learn such a piece is not as big as it would be learning a concerto or a sonata. The *Phantasy* also resembles on a condensed sonata, as it can be divided into three inter-connected shorter "movements." In the first movement (mm. 1-230), Bowen uses an episodic quasi-sonata form. The piece begins with a slow introduction in F major, which presents the main theme, that will appear various times throughout the piece. The introduction accelerates to a *poco più allegro* section, which serves as the first thematic section of the modified sonata form. Bowen returns to the slower theme from the introduction and utilizes the mediant-related key of D major (a key relationship which he also explored in the Second Sonata), followed by a clear development section, as both themes are fragmented and never settle in a particular key centre. The first thematic section returns in m. 170, followed by a transitional section in mm. 209-230. The second 'movement' is a song-like *Poco adagio*, offering no repeated sections, relatively stable in D-flat major throughout, thus evading any particular form structure. The final section of the *Phantasy*, marked *Allegro vivo*, functions as its third and final 'movement', and returns to the home key of F major. This section most closely resembles rounded binary form, but with two internal units, for an ABCA structure.