

LIONEL TERTIS AND THE FLOWERING OF EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY
ENGLISH VIOLA REPERTOIRE

By

Kimberly Buschek

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of the requirements for the degree of
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Advisory Committee:
Professor Gerald Fischbach, Chair
Professor Daniel Foster
Professor David Salness
Professor Rita Sloan
Professor Peter Beicken

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Frank Bridge	Pensiero	8
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Frank Bridge	Serenade	2
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ABSTRACT

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Kimberly Buschek, Doctor of Musical Arts,
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Directed By: Professor Gerald Fischbach, School of Music

This performance project focused on English viola literature written in the first half of the twentieth century. During this time, numerous English composers were influenced by Lionel Tertis' unprecedented approach to the viola as a virtuosic and solo instrument. In addition to being an inspiration to composers of whom he was not in direct contact, Tertis' innovative vision for the viola led to numerous collaborations with prominent English composers of his generation. Ralph Vaughan Williams, Arnold Bax, York Bowen, Frank Bridge, Benjamin Britten, and Rebecca Clarke – his own protégé – composed some of the most important works for viola thus directly shaping the impression of the instrument as we know it today.

Tertis' artistry as a performing violist was unmatched at the beginning of the twentieth century. He had a unique approach to the instrument which focused on concept of sound, tone color, concentrated listening, continuous vibrato, discreet portamento, and expressive interpretation. His convincing musical and technical ideas

led him to write a treatise about how to achieve a beautiful tone. His passion for teaching and concern for the viola's posterity greatly enhanced the development of the viola. Tertis transcribed, edited, and premiered many works during his career.

The music that Lionel Tertis influenced can be seen as a microcosm for a musical resurgence in England during the first half of the twentieth-century. The catalyst for this was artistic influences in the form of nationalism, folk music, romanticism, modernism, and impressionism, among others. Before this, England was widely referred to as "the land without music" but in a very real sense, Lionel Tertis was one of the pioneers who, through his artistry of the viola, led the way to the renaissance of music in England in the twentieth century.

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