Senior Recital:
Lee, Yun-Yi, Viola

Johannes Brahms
Sonata for Viola and Piano Op.120. No.1
I. Allegro appassionato
II. Andante con poco adagio
III. Allegretto grazioso
IV. Vivace

George Rochberg
Sonata for Viola and Piano
I. Allegro moderato
II. Adagio lamentoso
III. Fantasia: Epilogue
PROGRAMME NOTES

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) listened a clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld’s playing in 1891. In 1890, He was already preparing to retire. However, because of the clarinetist’s wonderful performance. He decided to pick up the pen again. 

Sonata for Viola and Piano Op.120. No.1 and 2 were composed on 1894. Later J.Jochahim suggested Brahms to adapt these pieces into viola version.

The sonata is in four movements, the first movement is Allegro appassionato, the second is Andante con poco adagio, the third movement is Allegretto grazioso, and the final movement is Vivace. The first movement is marked appassionata, and the mood here is more lyrical and wistful. The second movement is one of Brahms' most beautiful. In this movement, the viola has a gorgeous main melody and the piano has simple, mysterious, harmony color. The third movement is an amiable waltz, with a descending Motif contrasting with its rising inversion. The piano gets us onto our feet with three forte Chords at the start of the Vivace last movement, and the viola joins in a tripping theme Which though derived the the falling figures of the previous movements has a forward Drive. In a Rondo structure, this theme returns a couple of times, contrasting with calmer Episodes.

George Rochberg (1918-2005) an American composer who wrote contemporary classical music. Sonata for Viola and Piano is the only one he composed for viola of his life. This work was completed in 1979. The American Viola Society and Brigham Young University invited George Rochberg to compose for celebrating the 75th birthday of William Primrose (1903-1982). Thus, the piece was born.

The sonata is in three movements, start with Allegro moderato, follow by Adagio lamentoso and end with Fantasia: Epilogue. A document mentions that the first two movements of the song were originally written for the violin. Later, because of the above-mentioned activities, he re-determines the direction of the song and he found that the timbre of the viola is more suitable than the violin. The last movement was created because of his wife’s words after listening. She said, “But it’s not finished. It needs something more to give it that sense of completion, that feeling that everything that needed to be said has been said.” He wanted it to be free and without a structured musical form. Therefore, He decided an epilogue would be a good choice. It became a Fantasia: Epilogue, which revisits themes from the first movement.