

Salzburg is such a beautiful city. I live about an hour's walk away from the city centre to the south. It's a long way to go to college but luckily Thomas kindly lent me his spare bike, so now I get to ride a bike and appreciate the beauty alongside the river every day.

College has been actually quite busy for me already. I have a string quartet group with three lovely people and fabulous players. It's going pretty well - we are working on Mozart's G major quartet, K.387 and we had a few rehearsals already. Each time I was amazed by how differently the same music could be rehearsed, because I also have worked on this quartet with the Fletcher Quartet. I am enjoying and inspired by a lot playing with this new group so far - there always are some fun ideas coming from each of us and we almost never have to disagree.

There are a few other chamber music affairs going on too because of the viola festival that will take place on the first 3 days of November. I am playing first parts in both Brett Dean's Testament for 12 violas and Bowen's Fantasia for 4 violas. Testament is a contemporary piece that has very complicated rhythms, but also mixed with many cool effects, and beautiful melodies. But mainly, the complicated rhythms are still the true struggle for us all. Luckily, William is going to conduct us in the concert so we will have someone to hold onto. The first part is really the easiest - most of the time; when other parts are having really difficult rhythms, I have some long note melodies which are really easy to count with William's conducting - so I sort of survived two rehearsals so far not too badly. On the other hand, I'm feeling extremely lucky to be asked to play first for Bowen's Fantasia too. It is my dream to play it and now it finally comes true and we will perform it! The harmony language of the music is like much other Bowen's music - strong romanticism, very juicy, condensed harmony, but as a consequence - it is indeed not easy to put together four parts. Right after we finished our first rehearsal, we planned a lot more rehearsals plus a lesson and casual performance, so hopefully we will get there in time!

Yue Yu

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