THE VIOLIN PLAYED BY HYMAN BRESS VOL. 3
ACCOMPANIED BY CHARLES REINER

Selections from the works of
Johannes Brahms, Henryk Wieniawski, Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky,
Pablo Sarasate, Gabriel Faure, Fritz Kreisler, and Antonin Dvorak

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FM 3353
SIDE I
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Sonata No. 3 in D Minor, Opus 108
Band 1: Allegro
Band 2: Adagio
Band 3: Scherzo
Band 4: Presto Agitato

SIDE II
Band 1: Scherzo Tarantelle
Henryk Wieniawski (1835-1880)
Band 2: MELODY
Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)
Band 3: Zapateado
Pablo Sarasate (1844-1908)
Band 4: Berceuse
Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)
Band 5: Schon Rosemarin
Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962)
Band 6: Slavonic Dance in G Minor
Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)
Band 7: Hungarian Dance in G Minor
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
THE VIOLIN
Presented in Four Volumes

VOL. 3

played by Hyman Bress

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Selections from the works of Johannes Brahms, Henryk Wieniawski, Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Pablo Sarasate, Gabriel Faure, Fritz Kreisler, and Antonin Dvorak

Hyman Bress

Canada's foremost violinist, was born in 1931 and began playing the violin at an early age. When only 15 years old he won a five year scholarship to the Curtis Institute of Music, Philadelphia, where he studied with Ivan Galamian. He subsequently gained a number of other prizes which included the Concert Artists Guild Award and the Heifetz Prize.

He appeared as a soloist with the Montreal, Toronto and C.B.C. Symphony Orchestras under internationally famous conductors and he evoked unanimous praise from both the press and the audiences as a result of these performances and the numerous recitals which he gave all over Canada. In addition he was engaged for broadcasts and television appearances and quickly established his reputation as a front rank violinist.

Before long Hyman Bress was invited to undertake engagements in Europe and the U.S.A. In Paris he appeared with the Orchestre Philharmonique de la Radiodiffusion Television Francaise and the Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Francaise, in London with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and gave recitals in Berlin, Vienna, London and the principal cities of Scandinavia and Holland. In America he was invited to appear with the Philadelphia Orchestra and gave recitals in New York and Boston. His inclusion in recital programmes of Bartok's Solo Sonata and Schoenberg's Fantasy, both requiring virtuoso performances, have left no doubt as to his masterly technique and musicianship. He has broadcast from several of the principal cities of Europe including London and Paris.

Hyman Bress is the possessor of one of the finest violins in the world today, a Guarnerius del Jesu, made in 1739.

The Violin Family

Egyptian Lyre

Lyre

Greek Chelys

Roman Testudo

Assyrian Chetarah or Ketharah

Greek Cithara

Persian and Arabic Kithara

Roman Cithara or Pidicula

Cithara in Transition also called Rotta

Moorish Cuitra, Guutra, or Guitarra

Moorish Guitarra

Spanish Viguela or Vihuela de arco

French Violle o Viole

Italian Viola or Violino

Guitar Fiddle

Spanish Guitar

Spanish Guitarra Latina or Viheuela de Mano

Guitarra Latina, or Viheuela de Mano

Fidel, Fidula, Figella Pythele, etc.

Guitarra

Old High German Chrohta or Chreta

Welsh Cithara

Anglo-Saxon Crowd

Cithara in Transition also called Rotta

Latin, Chrotha, Rotta, Rote

Moorish Guitarra

Latin, Rotta, Rotte, Rote
It is not known who first constructed the perfect violin, but there seem to be several reasons for believing that the instrument arrived in its present state due to several makers. It is probably Gaetano Bertolotti, 1540-1609, who was called da Salo, who evolved from the lyra the model of the modern violin. His workmanship, although crude, led him to experiment finally with a low arch model until he adopted a comparatively flat model. His violins today are still of great value. Giovanni Paolo Maggini, 1580-1640, the pupil of Gasparo, made great advances. His model is fairly flat, his varnish excellent, and many of his instruments have two rows of purfling. Other Brescian masters, besides his son, Pietro Santo Maggini, were Matteo Bente, Dominico and Antonio Pasta, Giovita Rodiani, and Pellegrino Zanetto.

References: Groves: "A New Dictionary" A. Jacobs

The Cremona Makers

The classical town of violin makers began its dynasty with the Amati family. Andrea and his sons Antonio and Girolamo were a prelude to the start which found its apex in the work of Niccolo 1596-1684, the son of Girolamo, who produced the wonderful violins known as "Grand Amati". His genius has been surpassed only by Antonio Stradivari, who with Giuseppe Antonio Guarneri better known as Giuseppe del Gesu, are considered to be the greatest makers of the instrument. Pupils of Stradivari who were outstanding were Carlo Bergonzi, Dominico Motagnana, Alessandro Gagliano, Ferdinand Gagliano, Lorenzo Guadagnini his son Giovanni Battista Guadagnini, also his sons Francesco and Omobono Guadagnini, and Francesco Gobetti, 1690-1715 Niccolo Amati taught his own son Girolamo and Paolo Grancino. Girolamo Amati taught Giovanni Andrea Guarneri, and his sons Giuseppe Gobetti, Giovanni Battista and Pietro Violanni Guarneri. The Ruggieri family of Cremona produced several eminent violin makers, foremost amongst them being Francesco Ruggieri. The Testore family of Milan, consisting of Carlo Giuseppe Testore, 1690-1720, Carlo Antonio Testore, 1730-1764, his son Giovanni and his brother Paolo Antonio Testore and the Tononi family of Bologna are also noted for their extremely brilliant work. The makers of violins in other parts of the world were mainly copies of the Italian masters and although experiments have taken place in order to perfect the violin still more, the work of these Italian masters reigns supreme.

THE HISTORY OF VIOLIN MUSIC

The Instrument:

The name "violin" was first applied to a type of instrument which had several members: the treble violin, the alto violin (viola), the tenor violin, which became obsolete early in the 18th century, the bass violin, or violin 'cello (meaning small bass) and the large bass or contrabass violin. The shape of all these instruments is the same, differing only in size.

The wood used in the construction of the violin is sycamore (maple) for the back, neck, ribs and bridge; pine for the table, bass bar, blocks, linings, and sound post; ebony for the fingerboard, tail-piece, nut, and pegs. The G D and A strings are made of sheep gut, often wound with an aluminum thread, whilst the E string is usually made of steel.

The sound of the instrument is made by causing the strings to vibrate through the friction of the bow, applied to the strings. The bridge vibrating in turn, sets the table reacting, and this in turn is communicated to the surrounding air outside and inside the instrument. The inner air as well as the sound post and ribs cause the back to vibrate, the sound post and ribs receiving their vibration from the table as well as the inner air.

Violin Playing:

Up to the end of the 16th century, there is no specification as to what instrument was used by the contemporaneous composers. Giovanni Gabrieli provides the earliest instance, 1587, of such a specification. His scores contain the first beginnings of instrumentalization, and marked an epoch in the history of music. Once the violin became accepted it progressed at a considerable pace. Monteverdi, 1610, has passages in the fifth position, which would be considered daring for the period. Biaio Marini however has the earliest known solo compositions, published in 1620. The "Romanesca" as it is called is a poor example and makes very few demands on the player. Carlo Farina may be rightly termed the founder of the violin virtuoso. He published in 1627 a collection of violin pieces, amongst which a "Capriccio Stravagante" is of the utmost interest both musically and technically. The composer was well aware of the powers of expression and character pertaining to the instrument, employing in his works a variety of bowing, double-stopping and chords. Tarquino Merula, 1640, shows a great advance in ideas and his contemporary Paolo Ucelini goes as high as the sixth position as well as creating a great variety of bowing.

Towards the end of 1630, the beginning of the earliest classical sonata came into being. G.B. Fontana, 1630, Monti Albano, 1629, Tarquino Merula, 1639, and M. Nerl, 1644, helped greatly to bring this about. From 1650 the Canzone falls out of use, and the Sonata then became the universally accepted term for violin composition.

With Giovanni Battista Vitali, 1644-1692, music for the violin was greatly improved. His Dances are concise in form and vigorous in character. The Ciacconno of his son, T Antonio, is justly famous.

The German, Thomas Baltzar who appeared in England and was considered to be the first great violinist to have appeared in that country, is retrospect not greatly advanced. Of far greater importance than Baltzar are the German violinists J. J. Walther, born 1650, and Franz Heinrich Biber, died 1698. Biber was able to combine the Italian style with the warmth of feeling which has predominated the musical art of Germany. Biber himself was no doubt an artist of great talent and achievement. With Torelli, 1657-1716, who wrote Concerti di Camera and Concerti Grossi, one sees the pattern significantly set for Vivaldi, Corelli and Handel. Arcangelo Corelli was the most eminent of the composer-violinist type which evolved at this time. His works in the main are laid out in the forms of his predecessors, the technique also keeping withing modest limits. Yet they mark an era, both in musical composition and in violin playing. Corelli, by talent and
character, had gained a position of authority with his contemporaries which has few parallels in the history of violin playing. As to the genius of the Venetian Vivaldi, the qualities that make him an artist of the highest rank are his extraordinary fertility as a composer, his ingenuity in molding new combinations, and devising new effects and, above all, his influence in creating the earliest instance of orchestration as applied to the concerto. Tartini, was thought to have been eccentric due to his passionate temperament, however he had a great influence on Tartini, who after Corelli was considered to be the greatest exponent of the Italian school. His works are technically very substantial as well as being bold and masterfully constructed. We now come to Tartini (1692–1770) who was highly poetical and dramatic and exerted an influence of undisputed authority for fifty years, in Italy, France and Germany. Formally his works are not as greatly advanced as those of his predecessors. His subjects, though not inferior to Corelli's have on the whole more breadth and development. As an executant, Tartini marks a great advance especially in the field of bowing. He was without a rival in the production of a fine tone as well as being capable of a great many varieties of bowing. It was the pupils of Corelli and Tartini who formed a connecting link between the schools of France and Germany. The Piedmontese, Somis, 1767–1763, one of Corelli's pupils, was the teacher of Giardini, 1790–1796, Pugnani, 1727–1803, and also of the teacher of Viotti, 1753–1824, his influence reaching down to Spohr.

Geminiani, 1680–1761, and Nardini had much to do with influencing the progress of violin music in England and Germany. The former published the first important violin "school" method and is still to this day of the greatest interest. Locatelli, 1693–1764, was a great individualist and his works for the instrument are both bold and experimental. In France violin playing in the late 17th century was still of a low standard. Lully, 1652, wrote many Sonatas as well as Concertos, conceived primarily Viotti, Kreutzer, 1768–1831, Rode, 1774–1840, and Baillot, 1771–1842, who were all of different temperaments, living in Paris and influencing violin playing and music to a great degree in that city. By applying their principles they were able to approach the art in a way which made it possible for them to deal with not only the Italian school but also the Quartets of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. J. F. Eck (1766) and Franz Eck. 1774–1809, were two remarkable players, the latter being the teacher of Spohr. Nicolò Paganini, 1784–1840, created an unprecedented sensation. He held Europe spellbound by his marvellous execution and thoroughly original and eccentric personality and style. His influence was particularly strong in France. The violinists DeBeriot, 1802–1870, and H. Vieuxtemps, 1820–1881, although spending a great deal of time in France, were of Belgian nationality, DeBeriot being influenced by Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini. Vieuxtemps was a very great violinist, and his compositions although frequently imbued with theatrical and bombastic elements contained ideas of great beauty and are often cleverly worked out. DeBeriot had a great pedagogical instinct and he trained Monasterio, born 1836, Sauret, born 1852, Schradieck, born 1846, Heerman, born 1844, Becker, born 1833, taught Sainton, 1813, Prume, 1816–1849, Alard, 1815–1886, and Leonard, born 1819. Alard, Leonard and Massart, 1811, headed the Franco-Belgian school. The pupils of Leonard were the prominent and outstanding Sarasate, 1844–1908, Marsick, and Dengremont, born in 1868.

Wieniawski, Lotto, and Teresina Tua were pupils of Massart. The friendship of Ferdinand David, 1810–1873 and Mendelssohn led David to a modern phase of musicianship. Playing the Sonatas of Bach and Quartets of Beethoven and other classical masters, he avoided one-sidedness in technique and musical judgment generally. This theory was proved to be sound by Joseph Joachim who mastered all styles of music equally well. David trained Japha, Rontgen, Jacobson, Schradieck, Hégar and, by far the most eminent, A. Wilhelmj, 1845–1908.

In Vienna the leading composers were almost all violinists. Anton Wranitzky and Dittersdorf were virtuosos of a high order. Schuppanzigh 1776–1830 may be regarded as the first great quartet player and adviser to both Haydn and Beethoven. His pupil, Mayseder, 1789–1863, along with Miska Hauser, 1822–1887, and DeAnna, 1835–1892, Ernst, 1814–1865, Hellmesberger, Senior, Don, Senior, 1815–1888, all studied with the noted pedagogue Boehm, 1798 to 1861. Ernst enormously talented imitated Paganini in style as a player but was a finer musician. With Joachim and Ernst, Hungarian as well as Gypsy music came into prominence. Joachim's Hungarian Concerto, as well as his Hungarian Dance transcriptions from Brahms originals, opened a field for beautiful and telling violin effects. Don, Jr. Trained Leopold Auer; Hellmesberger taught Kreisler, and Jansa trained Madame Neruda. Violin technique has continued to advance with the advent of the contemporary idioms. Ysaye, 1858–1931, wrote six
Sonatas and other works for violin and they are both original and interesting technically.

Modern violin sound has a great deal to thank Fritz Kreisler who by the nature of his talent has opened the door to a refined and warm art. His composing although not overly important created for a whole generation a most pleasurable experience.

SIDE I, Band 1, 2, 3, 4

Sonata No. 3 in D minor by Johannes Brahms Opus 108 (1833-1897), composed in 1888 when Brahms spent the summer near Thun, Switzerland. Conceived on a larger scale than the two earlier sonatas, it is in four movements and is symphonic and dramatic in character. The first movement allegro has many moods; the noble first subject announced by the violin, passes through impetuous passages to the romantic melody of the second subject. Contrary to expectation the development is subdued and brooding in mood. The recapitulation is by contrast strong and breathes a fiery life after the calmness that precedes it. The Coda is built on a tonic pedal and provides a formal balance to the development section. The second movement, Adagio, is soulful with a few high points of passionate intensity. The third movement, Scherzo, is built on a motif of three notes and is first heard on the piano in octaves. It is delightful in its passage work and provides a graceful diversion to the Adagio. The Finale presto agitato is powerful and exciting. The syncopated rhythms provide an interesting contrast to the second theme, which is played by the piano alone. Essentially it is emotional in character, and the movement closes on a climax of mighty crescendos and virtuoso passagework.

Technical Analysis of Violinistic Problems
Johannes Brahms, Sonata No. 3 in D minor

This superbly written Sonata fulfills the most ardent desires of the violinist who wishes to show the Romantic spirit of the 19th Century. Essentially lyrical in character, it requires a strong right and left hand to bring the warm, throbbing sound to successful rendition. The size of the instrument is forgotten in promoting the orchestral sound that should fill the auditorium with a strong and romantic vibrancy. The passagework, although not overly extensive, requires an articulation of a different order, and a reserve strength must be built up to make this work a complete experience. The last movement particularly reaches into new sounds which are perhaps an outcome of the conception violinistically of the virtuoso violinist; the heavy staccatos, and the florid runs all have a pesante grandeur from which our contemporary writers such as Bartok, Prokofiev and Schoenberg have gained great inspiration.

SIDE II, Band 1:
Scherzo Tarantelle by Henryk Wieniawski, (1835-1880)

Well-known Polish violinist-composer, wrote many works in this fashion. The Scherzo Tarantelle is virtuoso in character and has been one of the most played virtuoso pieces in the modern repertory.

Technical Analysis of Violinistic Problems
Henri Wieniawski, Scherzo Tarantelle.

The Scherzo Tarantelle is one of the most interesting specimens of violin virtuosity. Both the right and left hand go through great pyrotechnical variations. The middle section is a beautiful example of arpeggios put to the use of musical virtuosity and is much akin to the Paganini innovation of playing on one string.

There are examples of octaves and broken double stops, as well as a goodly sprinkling of the speedy spiccato.

SIDE II, Band 2
Melody by Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-93).

This small work is in the typical Tchaikovsky vein; simple in form, its opening theme is expressive and lilting. In the version on this record it includes some virtuoso passages.

Technical Analysis of Violinistic Problems
Peter Ilytch Tchaikowsky, Melody

The Auer version of the Melody requires a fluid technique. Both left and right hand must be at the ready disposal of the player in interpreting a warm vibrato and elegant sound, which are interspersed with runs which connect the themes to make this a charming encore.

SIDE II, Band 3:
Zapateado by Pablo Sarasate (1844-1908)

A vigorous Spanish dance for single performer originally, in which the heels tap out different patterns.

Technical Analysis of Violinistic Problems
Pablo Sarasate, Zapateado

Perhaps Zapateado is one of those solos that covers all the essentially fleeting problems of the bow and left hand. Harmonics are used to the greatest effect, as are the most devilish bow variants. Scales and leaps are made musically interesting, all adding up to a brilliant conglomeration of violinism.
SIDE II, Band 4:

Berceuse, by Gabriel Faure (1845-1924)

Cradle Song, or Lullaby, is inspired and typical of quieter moments of the Faure style.

Technical Analysis of Violinistic Problems

Gabriel Faure, Berceuse

This lyrical piece must create an effect of stillness and beauty. For this the left hand and right hand must be as one in control and expressiveness.

SIDE II, Band 5:

Schon Rosemarin, by Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962)

The Austrian violinist of great fame wrote many pieces in various styles. The one recorded is typical of the Viennese spirit which Kreisler knew to perfection.

Technical Analysis of Violinistic Problems

Fritz Kreisler, Schon Rosmarin

This "lollypop" is typical of Kreisler's impetuous Vienneseness. It calls for a controlled bow and an expressive flying staccato, necessary to interpret the subtle and ever changing variations in tempo.

SIDE II, Band 6:

Slavonic Dance in G minor by Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904)

This Slavonic Dance is one of a number in the Czech national style which also appears but does not dominate his other works. The transcription is the most famous for the violin and is by Kreisler.

Technical Analysis of Violinistic Problems

Antonin Dvorak, Slavonic Dance, in G minor

This transcription by Kreisler upholds the tradition of the early 20th century and continued even to this day of transcribing the Romantic smaller works for performance on other instruments. The sound produced by this piece is best exemplified by Kreisler himself, the key being a warm and expressive vibrato and a stylistic predilection for Central European 19th Century Romanticism.

SIDE II, Band 7:

Hungarian Dance in G Minor, by Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), arranged by Joachim.

This Hungarian Dance is based on the original for two pianos by Brahms. Its pyrotechnical nature helps to create a gypsy-like feeling, and the excellent transcription for violin has sustained its place in the Romantic showpiece repertoire.

Technical Analysis of Violinistic Problems

Johannes Brahms, Hungarian Dance, arranged for violin by Joseph Joachim.

Joachim has managed to keep this dance as pure and as close to the Brahms original as may be wished for. Violinistically, the problems are solvable and they have on them the touch of the master violinist who knew his instrument. Some doubling on passages with octaves creates the effect without causing undue difficulty, a device which an instrumentalist would employ in writing for the instrument native to himself.