

THE VIOLIN

PLAYED BY HYMAN BRESS
ACCOMPANIED BY CHARLES REINER
FOLKWAYS RECORDS FM 3354

Selections from the works of Claude Debussy, Ernest Bloch, Arnold Schonberg, and Bela Bartok

VOL. 4



SIDE I

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)
Sonata for Violin and Piano

Band 1: Allegro Vivo

Band 2: Intermede

Band 3: Finale

Band 4: NIGUN (from "Baal Shem" Suite)

Ernest Bloch (1880-1959)

Band 5: FANTASY FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO, Opus 47
Arnold Schonberg (1874-1949)

SIDE II

BELA BARTOK (1881-1945)
Solo Sonata for Violin, Opus 115

Band 1: Ciacona

Band 2: Fuga

Band 3: Melodia

Band 4: Presto

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

THE VIOLIN

THE VIOLIN Presented in Four Volumes**played by Hyman Bress**

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SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS OF

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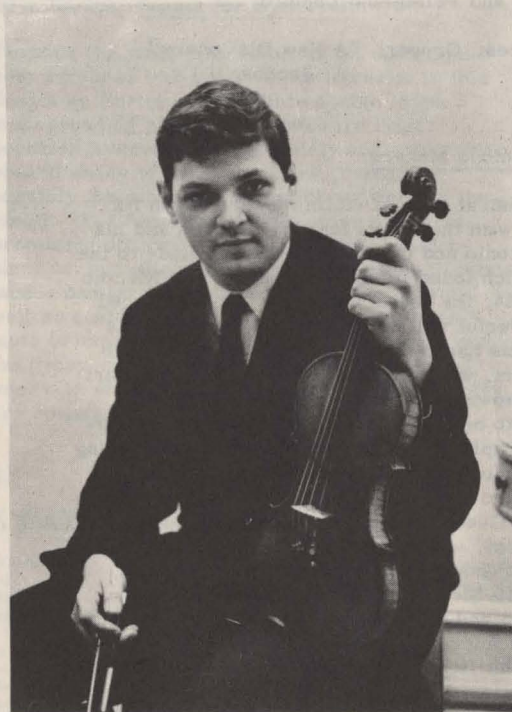
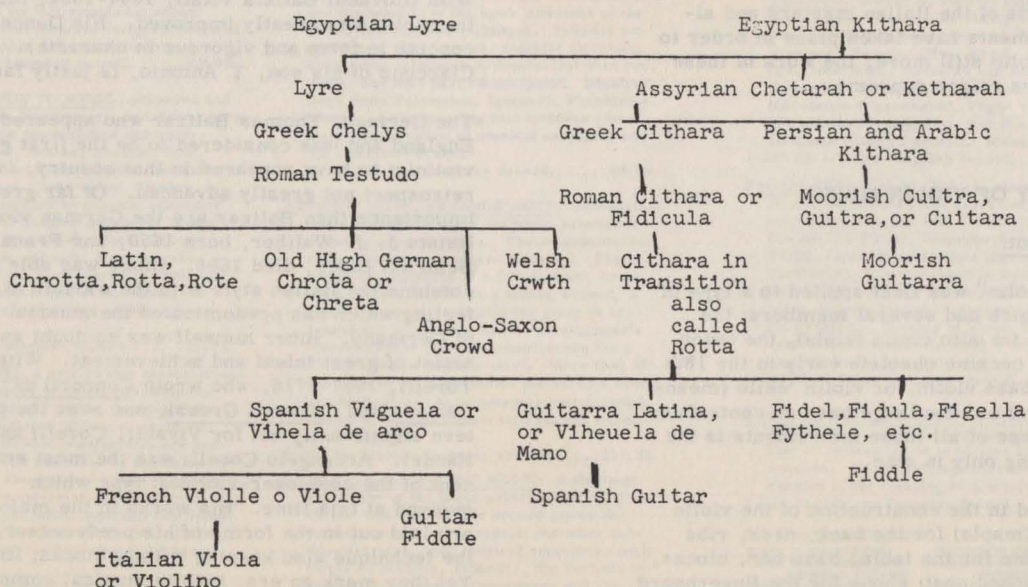
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Hyman Bress Canada's foremost violinist, was born in 1931 and began playing the violin at an early age. When only 15 years old he won a five year scholarship to the Curtis Institute of Music, Philadelphia, where he studied with Ivan Galamian. He subsequently 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 Télévision Française and the Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française, 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

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 Gasparo Bertolotti, 1540-1609, who was called da Sallo, 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 violas 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 Amatis". 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, Ferdinando 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 Paulo Grancino. Girolamo Amati taught Giovanni Andrea Guarneri, and his sons Giuseppe Giovan Battista and Pietro Giovanni 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 Paulo 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 copyists 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 viol. 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 instrumentation, 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. Biajio 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 virtuosi. 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. Tarquinio 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, Tarquinio Merula, 1639, and M. Neri, 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 Batista Vitali, 1644-1692, music for the violin was greatly improved. His Dances are concise in form and vigorous in character. The Ciaccono 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 in 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 within 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. Veracini, 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, 1676-1763, one of Corelli's pupils, was the teacher of Giardini, 1760-1796, 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, who was appointed director of the Royal Chapel, wrote very simply, as did Rebel, 1687, whilst Francoeur in 1715 wrote Sonatas in which he used the thumb to produce chords, thereby showing progress. The first French violinist of note however was Baptiste Anet 1700. The violinist Pagin, born 1721, Touchemoulin, 1727-1801, Lahoussaye, 1735-1818, Barthelemon, died 1808, Berthame, 1752-1828, were all influenced by the Italian school. However, Jean-Marie Leclair is without rival in his imaginative and colorful writing both musically and technically. The individualist Pierre Gavinies, 1728-1800, well known for his studies, formed an independent French school. Alexander Boucher, 1770-1861 was self taught and an immensely talented violinist although not of a serious character. It was however, Viotti, 1753-1824, who had unparalleled influence over the French scene. His Concertos are to this day still performed and are presently enjoying a revival of interest.

In Germany, the names Graun, 1698-1771, F. Benda, 1709-1786, Johann C. Stamitz, 1719-1761, and his two sons, Carl and Anton, C. Cannabich, 1731-1798, W. Cramer, 1745-1799, Ignaz Franzl, born 1736, and his son Ferdinand, 1770-1833, were prominent in Berlin and in the south of Germany in the famous Mannheim school. The great Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was proficient equally at the violin as at the piano and wrote many Sonatas as well as Concertos, concentrating more on musical values rather than on the aspect of technique. Spohr can be reckoned as the person who exerted, aside from Paganini,

the greatest influence on the style of modern violin playing. Compared with his predecessors they are not merely improvements but with him the Concerto rises from being merely a show-piece to the dignity of a work of art. Spohr had great powers of execution, but he used them in a manner not wholly free from one-sidedness, and it cannot be said that he added greatly to the technique of the instrument. The predecessors of Spohr, at the end of the 18th century, were principally Viotti, Kreutzer, 1766-1831, 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 their 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. Nicolo 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 Sinton, 1813, Prume, 1816-1849, Alard, 1815-1888, 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, Jacobsohn, Schradieck, Hegar 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 DeAhna, 1835-1892, Ernst, 1814-1865, Hellmesberger, Senior, Dont, 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. Dont, Jr. Trained Leopold Auer; Hellmesberger taught Kreisler, and Jansa trained Madame Neruda. Violin technique has continued to advance with the advent of the contemporary idiom. 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

Claude Debussy (1862-1918) Sonata for Violin and Piano.

In 1915 Debussy decided to write six Sonatas for different and unusual instrumental combinations, of which he completed only three. The reason for writing the six Sonatas, he wrote in 1916 was to: "Let us find again our liberty, our forms; since we invented most of them it is only right that we should conserve them. There are none more beautiful. Let us defy the reproach of being trivial." Debussy's later works, characterized by a definite subtlety, are also imbued with technical brilliance and masterful variation in ideas.

The first movement of the Sonata for Violin and Piano, Allegro Vivo, is a masterpiece of the integration of subtlety, even though the clarity of ideas is ever-present. The violin melody introduced by a series descending thirds rises and falls continuously without being clearly developed. It is hard to speak of the development as being of a formal nature, due to the vagueness and indeterminate melodic line which are combined in the subtle harmonies of the piano. The second movement Intermede (Fantastique et Leger) starts with a cadenza in the violin and is capricious in nature. There is a beautiful and strongly noble theme which is preceded and followed by rhythmical patterns of 16th notes both pizzicato and staccato in character. These eerie-like patterns form an imaginative and strongly contrasting background to the melodic cantabile passages mentioned above. In the last movement, the Finale, (tres anime) in which the first movement theme is heard by means of augmentation, serves as an introduction to the brilliant passage theme of the last movement. Debussy described this movement as "the simple interplay of an idea twirling around itself." The piano occasionally takes over the harmonious flow, but only once towards the end does it state the theme.

Technical Analysis of Violinistic Problems

Claude Debussy, Sonata for Violin and Piano

This remarkable work shows again that the great composers, by writing for the instrument along purely musical lines, create a violinis-

tic effect of great imagination. The outstanding feature of the Sonata is the color changes that are called for. Vibratos of many shades, harmonics, pizzicatos, and scales to the top of the instrument, erupting into the most surprising tremolo flurries, make this work a landmark in violinism.

SIDE I, Band 4:

Ernest Bloch (1880-1959) Nigun - part of the "Baal Shem" suite, Three pictures of Chassidic life were written in 1923. The second one, "Nigun", is an improvisation and expresses fully the style that Bloch had captured so successfully. Bloch had no restrictive system, harmonically speaking, and did not create a school as did some of his contemporaries. However, his harmonies are definitely individualistic and are especially effective when used as a background to the expressiveness of a string instrument or that of the voice.

Technical Analysis of Violinistic Problems

Ernest Bloch, Nigun

The technical problems inherent in this expressive work are those of intense and subtle changes in sound production. Basically it is a problem of vibrato, the mastery of which can only be achieved by means of complete identification with this style.

SIDE I, Band 5:

Arnold Schoenberg, "Fantasy for Violin and Piano" Opus 47:

This richly articulated work in one movement was written with the idea of giving to the violin a soloistic and virtuoso character. Schoenberg wrote the violin separately first and then added the piano accompaniment. This homophonic conception introduces a special element into the composer's problem and its solution. The composition opens with a slow grave which is largely imaginative in nature. This is followed by a fast transition, with an interlude and lento leading to a grazioso. This is followed again by a slow section which is stately in character and has as a rhythmical marking grave. A piu mosso followed by alternate sections of faster and slower scherzi which with a coda, brings the work to a recapitulation, ending the composition in a flurry of technical brilliance. Rufer says of the "Fantasy": "One can easily see that the compositional procedure used by Schoenberg in his Opus 47 - that of letting one phrase take up the end of the preceding one - helps both the comprehensibility and the compactness of the music. The combination too of two forms of series into a new melodic whole shows the possibility of development which 12-note composition still holds at the disposal of a real creative imagination, without making it necessary to break the law of the series and its tonality. If one regards the work as a whole, one feels the effect

of rhythmical tonality, if one understands the expression "tonality" in the metaphorical sense as an ordering principle."

Technical Analysis of Violinistic Problems

Arnold Schoenberg, Fantasy for Violin, Opus 47.

The challenge presented by Schoenberg is of an entirely new nature. Its inclusion technically of great leaps, double harmonics, unorthodox double stops, and generally intricate passage work, tax the intonational facilities of the most technically equipped instrumentalist, leaving no doubt that Schoenberg has added an entirely new dimension to the palette of violin literature.

SIDE II, Bands 1,2,3,4

Bela Bartok (1881-1945) Solo Sonata for Violin, Opus 115.

The first movement, Ciacona, is enormously conceived and orchestral in sound. The variations are loosely held together by means of extended and revolutionary passage work. The theme opening chords are heard throughout the movement, Fuga, is complex and uses a four-voiced fugue for an essentially monodic instrument. The structure is thematically in related episodes used freely. The fugue subject and its mirror are at some points played simultaneously, an ingenious innova-

tion which Bartok was able to successfully incorporate technically. The Melodia is essentially without harmony, except in the short middle section. It is more easily comprehended as is the last movement, Presto, which begins with busy-bee like passages -- followed by a sort of wild, gypsy-like section. The work ends with a little Coda, which is very moving and sums up what Bartok had discovered in this personal and expressive mode of composing. The work has an ever-present tonal center of G minor and perhaps Bartok helped to sustain the interest for this highly complex work by means of this tonal center.

Technical Analysis of Violinistic Problems

Bela Bartok, Sonata for Solo Violin

Perhaps the most interesting of all contemporary ventures into the Violinistic realm is this Sonata by Bartok. Leaps into double stops and cascading passages of awkward finger-breaking intervals, set at widely and arbitrarily spaced areas of the instrument, make this possibly the most difficult work written for the violin. The fugue has double stops of unpromising difficulty, an innovation of unison-pizzicati and glissandos into harmonics. Tremulandos and tenths are found in the Melodia as well as double harmonics. The Presto uses a mute to express the fleeting passage work, and the gypsy-like chords leap into widely spaced intervals which do not let up until the final notes are sounded.

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