

THE VIOLIN

HYMAN BRESS: VIOLIN / CHARLES REINER: PIANO / VOLUME 5 / FOLKWAYS RECORDS FM 3355
SESSIONS: SOLO SONATA / WEBERN: OPUS 7 / HABA: OPUS 9A / BRESS: FANTASY



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FOLKWAYS FM 3355

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THE VIOLIN

Vol. 5

played by **Hyman Bress**

Charles Reiner pianist

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.



SIDE I

Solo Sonata - Roger Sessions

SIDE II

Band 1: Anton Webern - Opus 7

4 pieces for violin and piano

The 4 pieces of Webern are a milestone in the literature of the violin.

Written in the Schoenbergian twelve note system, it gives an entirely new profile to that system through the creating of suspense by means of telescoping the time element.

Into each piece Webern speaks his cosmic world. Sometimes planetary, sometimes the jungle of the earth. Often the devotion of this creative master seems to sum up in mere seconds what had previously taken anything from fifteen to three quarters of an hour.

Band 2: Alois Haba -

Opus 9A, Fantasie for violin solo (1921)

(A. Haba on his own composition:)

Considered vertically and in the light of certain well known acoustic phenomena, natural tone system, aliquot, differential and summation tones, the $1/4$ tone scale is a combination of two series of semitones, the tones of each being related to one another respectively, whereas the two series of semitones have no relation to one another, as there is a difference of a $1/4$ tone between them. The semitone system may be described as an acoustically related unit. It is a well known fact that violin playing as well as that on all stringed instruments requires a continual alternation between natural, pythagorean, and tempered intonation. One could in consequence speak of various nuances of the tones and intervals which have hitherto been used in semitone chromatics. These nuances, natural, pythagorean, or tempered Major thirds respectively do not alter the general character of intervals. On the other hand $1/4$ tones or any new intervals are not nuances but definite independent intervals with characteristic tonal individuality. In most cases the new accidentals are at once an indication of which semitones must be divided to obtain

the $1/4$ tone. High G is half the semitone G-G sharp (not G-A flat). High D is half D-D sharp (not D-E flat), etc. This is especially clear when moving to F sharp. This intonation of the old well known intervals (thirds, sixths) remains unchanged. High C plus E are the usual interval of a sixth. I did not arrive at my system of $1/4$ tones from the need of writing progressions of $1/4$ tones, but in order to cut lose from the chromatic uniformity, and to attain a freer use of intervals by means of the great possibilities of 24 tones as compared to 12. The effect of the leading note is produced by the following intervals which are made possible by the quarter tone system in addition to the relation of whole tone to semitone, ($1-1/2$)

$1:3/4$; $1:1/4$; $5/4:1$; $5/4:3/4$; $5/4:1/2$; $5/4:1/4$;
 $3/4:1/2$; $3/4:1/4$; $1/2:1/4$;

Band 3: Hyman Bress - Fantasy (Electronic)

My own fantasy is in four movements and is in a free twelve note system. It is influenced by the fantasy of Schoenberg in part and by my association with many great contemporary works written for the violin.

His knowledge of the violin is also extensive and he is able by means of writing instruction concerning bow placement (example, besides the bridge or away from the bridge - giving a scraping or feeble tone) to produce a panorama of great spaciousness and reflection.

Webern, has opened the door to the worship of the individual note as opposed to stretches of phrases too often meaningless in content. His basic desire for connection of melodic ideas must be respected though and his music should give us the message we seek in all great music.

The Role of Electronic Music in Relationship to the Violin

By HYMAN BRESS

NOW that in our age perhaps the technical limits of violinism are known, not that they are readily accessible to any but the greatest virtuoso, it seems that creativity along these lines either must be retarded if not altogether halted, or a way must be found into the new horizon's which must surely exist. This it seems to me can be done basically in two ways.

The obvious method that comes to mind would be a change in the structure of the violin as an instrument. The less obvious perhaps is to involve the violin in sounds not previously contemplated but which seem today to be a part of the rapidly advancing avantgardism and which could bring new colours of infinite variety to the existing palette of tonal representation.

What I personally propose therefore is neither the act of surrender nor the act of adhering to blinkers. Let us welcome this new force even with dampened enthusiasm into the relatively gentle world of music and see if the new somehow cannot be integrated with the old.

Instrumentation has always had its predilective characteristics. The strutor will find new fields in which to indulge in if the means can be found to enlarge upon the socially acceptable ways which performance finds itself geared towards. A recital on the violin usually has as an added attraction, a piano accompaniment; on the grand scale the little violin is pitted against the modern orchestra, the leading protagonists being Bartok, Berg and Schoenberg. These supreme masters conceived of a new violinist when they wrote their respective compositions, Schoenberg making no secret of this fact. These masters however do not hold the avantgarde at bay any longer. Of the three the Schoenberg concerto is the least performed work, however even this work is gradually edging its way towards universal critical acclaim, as it is capable of great feeling and sensitivity. It is precisely on these grounds perhaps that the wing of electronic music creativitists take issue with that master's role. It is only through Webern that they feel that serial music is linked evolution-wise with that of electronic music.

Busoni and Electronic Music

The composition of electronic music is electrically generated sounds made audible by a generator and recorded solely on a tape recorder. It must be realized by a loud speaker system and it was not until 1906 with the invention of the valve that electronic music could in any way have been possible.

Jorg Mager in a letter to Busoni was the first to suggest the possibility of making "available to artists of the future all frequencies melodically as well as harmonically as well as the partial tones which determine the timbre." However only with the invention of new tape techniques which went further than the mere play back system was it possible to

realize this new music. It is now known that each fourth level is discernible to the ear in that (A) to (B) measures a difference of 52 levels (A440-B492 cycles per second). It can be readily seen that the scope for different levels of perception is increased to an enormous degree.

It is because of this that scores of electronic music resemble acoustical diagrams with co-ordinates of frequency (cycles per second) time (cm.p.s.) intensity (measured in decibels). The triple unit of the note has been organized into pitch levels of a three dimensional conception. In the case of composers such as Boulez, this organization takes on the trappings of Cabalistic computerism and even though this organism is analysable to its finest particle it is governed by its own subjective creative hypotheses very little of which can be recognized either on a purely aesthetic or scientific basis.

Critical and malevolent feelings about the lack of musical connection are therefore in my opinion sometimes true. Eimert who is the spokesman for the Cologne group belittles the use of an all-atmospheric electronic composition. True as this attack on programatic creation may be I do feel that Henri Pousser is quite truthful in admitting that the problem is now of co-ordinating the technique of means with the ideas now advanced, and until this is secured the idea of relying only on sinus tones to represent electronic composition especially in combination with an instrument such as the violin, would be mere folly, not withstanding the technical astuteness of even a Stockhausen.

In my quest for a common denominator I took into account, as far as I could control the circumstances (being placed in a situation where electronic facilities were minimum) the nature of the task at hand. I was astounded to discover that experimentation which lay ahead of me was of such a great and arduous task that it strained my patience and stamina to the limit.

My Conclusions

Many hours of experimenting gave me a fair indication as to the direction of my efforts. It was only by this process of trial and error that I was able to reach the conclusion for myself that the rhythm was as good a starting point as any in tackling the problem in hand. I thereupon mapped out a rhythmical counterpoint which I felt would satisfy the needs of the composition which was written for violin and piano in a basically serial technique. When this was done I utilized the oscillators which were contained in little boxes, each one having a series designated to it from 1 to 5,000, five thousand to ten thousand and so on until the limit which was twenty thousand was reached. The manipulating of these was done by means of a keyboard similar to that of a piano and which could be read on an oscillograph for further com-

putation and checking. I personally found that a degree of atmospheric sound was most attractive when used in combination with violin and piano. To this I added several elements of paraphernalia, iron containers, metal appliances which I either hit or bounced for a rhythmical effect, having the effect of sharply contrasting the softer texture of the pure electronic sounds which were easier at this stage for me to produce in this fashion. This of course caused this to be an electro-concretish conglomeration. I used at one point as a contrast the very low frequencies of sinus tones to contrast the high pitched violin passage which acted as a link in the form that I had chosen.

There goes into the making of an art work a great deal of previously assimilated ideas, and this was true also of my electronic experience.

I had listened to the records of Stockhausen and had felt most attracted by his pointillistic approach. However upon application I discovered that it was more to the style of Varese that I was drawn towards, and this in turn influenced my work.

The thicker forest-like clusters seemed more earthy than the space-like characteristics of Stockhausen. I therefore drew up a set of initial conclusions.

(1) That the violin is well served by the piano, in that it furthers its cantabile prospects, and that the electronic sounds should cater to one or the other. Serving both led to clutter and disorganization.

(2) That the wide range made possible by electronic sounds served as a wonderful contrast, to either instrument, especially when used at the extremities.

(3) That in order to fully use this medium a machine capable of greater flexibility would have to be built.

(4) And finally that our impressions regarding the violin itself would have to undergo extensive re-examination.

This then was my way; my first attempt to express myself in the space age of violinism, and age which will surely bring its proportion of talent, but which I should so much like to see investigated to a greater degree by instrumentalists themselves so that a repertoire for the future of the violin is safely assured.

Musical Events, April, 1962

THE VIOLIN

FM3351 THE VIOLIN, Vol. 1, played by Hyman Bress; Selections from great composers for the violin (17th and 18th Century); Arcangelo Corelli (La Folia), Giuseppe Tartini (Devil's Trill), Jean-Marie Leclair (Sarabande and Tamborin), Johann Sebastian Bach (Partita No. 2 in D minor). Accompanying program notes include Technical Analysis of Violinistic Problems, History of Violin Music and List of Composers who have written significant works for the violin.

1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....

FM3352 THE VIOLIN, Vol. 2, played by Hyman Bress, acc. by Charles Reiner. **Mozart: Sonata in E Minor, No. 28 K. 304; Schubert: Sonatina No. 1, Opus 137; Beethoven: Violin and Piano Sonata in C Minor, Op. 30, No. 2; Paganini: Caprice No. 5, Caprice No. 24.** With notes on the history of the violin, program notes on the selections, and discussion of violin technique.

1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record

FM 3353 THE VIOLIN, Vol 3, played by Hyman Bress, acc. by Charles Reiner. Johannes Brahms: Sonata No. 3 in D minor, Op. 108, Hungarian Dance. H. Wieniawski: Scherzo Tarantelle. Tchaikovsky: Melody. P. Sarasate: Zapateado. Gabriel Faure: Berceuse. Fritz Kreisler: Schon Rosemarin. A. Dvorak: Slavonic Dance. Notes include history of the violin, program notes on the selections, discussion of violin technique.

1-12" 33 1/3 rpm longplay record

FM 3354 THE VIOLIN, Vol. 4, played by Hyman Bress, acc. by Charles Reiner. Claude Debussy: Sonata for Violin & Piano. Ernest Bloch: Nigun. Arnold Schoenberg: Fantasy for Violin

& Piano. Bela Bartok: Solo Sonata for Violin. Notes include history of the violin, program notes on the selections, discussion of violin technique.

1-12" 33 1/3 rpm longplay record



HISTORY OF MUSIC

The history of music is an integral part of the history of man. Recordings of primitive, folk and classical music make available to the teacher and the student with the actual sound of history.

FT3700 2,000 YEARS OF MUSIC, compiled by and released in memory of Dr. Curt Sachs; a concise history of the development of music from the earliest times through the 18th century. Greek Music, Jewish Music, Gregorian Chant, Early Polyphonic Music, The Troubadours, The Minnesingers, Early Netherland Music, (circa 1450), Early Netherland Music (circa 1500), German Choral Music (circa 1500), German Choral Music of the Reformation, the Zenith of Religious Polyphony in the 16th Century (G. P. da Palestrina and Orlandus di Lasso), The Madrigal in Italy and Germany, Harpsichord Music (about 1600), German Dances (about 1600), Italian Church Music (Early Baroque), Opera (Monteverdi), The German Motet (J. S. Bach and Heinrich Schutz), Chamber Music (about 1700 - J. S. Bach & G. F. Handel), Rococo, Sentiment. With complete descriptive notes.

2-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay records....

FE4510 (P510) WORLD'S VOCAL ART; a compilation of recordings of vocal styles which are affected by language and tradition and by different ways of cultivation. Selection and notes by Henry Cowell. Includes: Bel Canto, German lieder, Russian operatic, Early German opera, French popular, Swiss Yodeling, North Indian (Pakistan) traditional, classical, Chinese opera-drama, Korean classical, Thailand operatic, Kurdish Mid-Eastern, Jewish Cantorial, North African traditional, Ethiopian classical, American blues, crooner, torch.

2-12" 33 1/3 rpm longplay records

FE4525 (P525) MAN'S EARLY MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS. Compiled and edited by DR. CURT SACH of Columbia University. This detailed survey with illustrated notes contains 67 recorded examples of musical instruments from all over the world; membranophones, idiophones, chorodophones. Includes tuned sticks, cymbals, rattles and scrapers, drums, chimes, bells, xylophones, sansa, harps, trumpets, horns, panpipes, flutes, clarinets, accordion, oboe, zither, guitars, banjos, gamelan, fiddles, hurdy-gurdy, etc.

2-12" 33 1/3 rpm longplay records

FS3865 GREGORIAN (PLAIN) CHANT. Doon Ludovic Bar-on O.S.B. explains and gives vocal examples; interviewed by Mildred Kayden on her radio program "Musically Speaking." Kyrie IX Missa de Beata Maria Virgine, Mass in Ancient Style, Sanctus XII, Agnus Dei XII, Cibivat Eos, Cantate Domino Session Choir of Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart, conducted by Theodore Marier and Mother Josephine Morgan. Notes.

1-12" 33 1/3 rpm longplay record