

VIOLIN WORKS OF
IGOR STRAVINSKY
PLAYED BY HYMAN BRESS

CHARLES REINER, PIANO

DIVERTIMENTO (1928-1934) | SUITE ITALIENNE | DUO CONCERTANTE (1932)

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FM 3356

VIOLIN WORKS OF IGOR STRAVINSKY

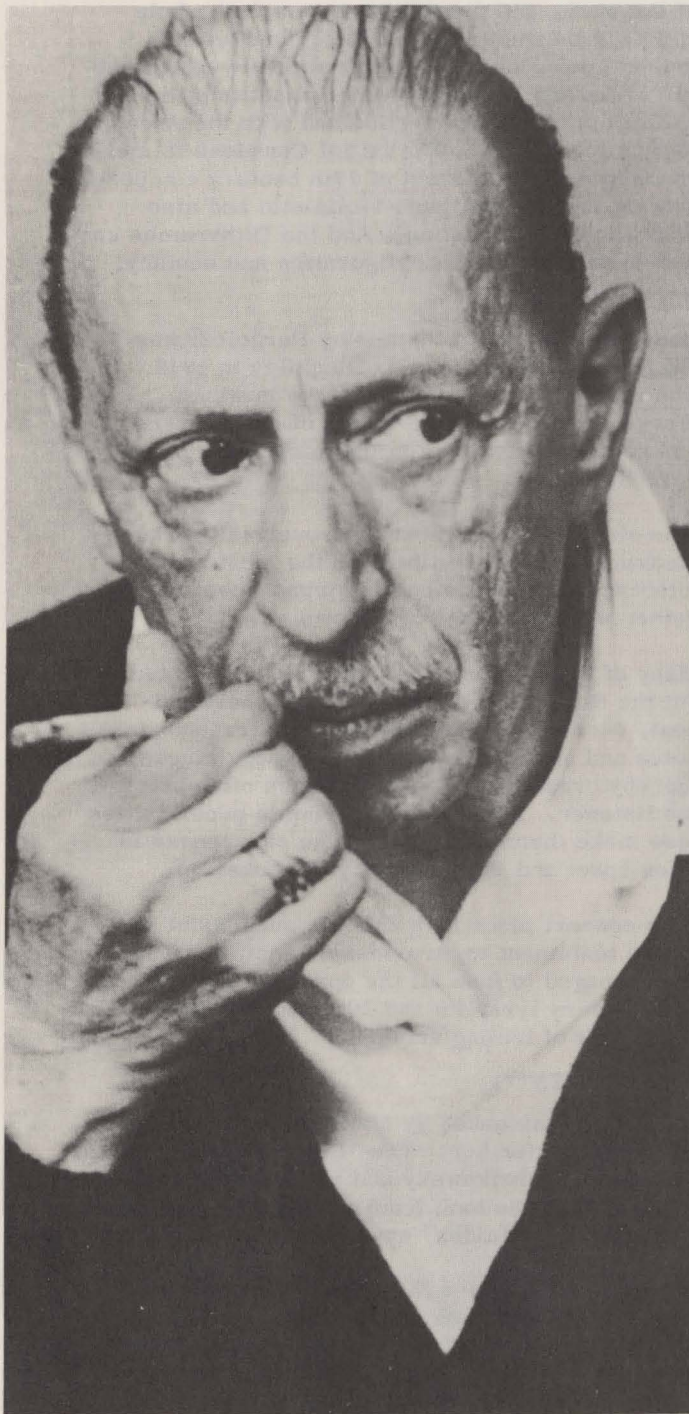
PLAYED BY HYMAN BRESS

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

FOLKWAYS FM 3356

FOLKWAYS RECORDS Album No. FM 3356
©1963 by Folkways Records & Service Corp., 43 W. 61st St., NYC, USA



VIOLIN WORKS OF
IGOR STRAVINSKY
PLAYED BY HYMAN BRESS

CHARLES REINER, PIANO

DIVERTIMENTO (1928-1934) | SUITE ITALIENNE | DUO CONCERTANTE (1932)

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FM 3356

IGOR STRAVINSKY born 1882 in Oranienbaum, Russia of a Polish father, graduated in Law in 1905 during which time he studied composition with Rimsky-Korsakov (1902-1908). His great successes "FIREBIRD" and "PETRUSHKA" and "RITE OF SPRING" assured his fame. Stravinsky has gone through many periods. His Russian period 1906-19, his Neo-classicism 1919-29, his Greek phase 1926-1934, his American period 1939-47 and his moving away from polydiatonic to dodecaphonic since 1952. The element which perhaps stands out most in Stravinsky's music is his incredibly rhythmic force. No matter what style or period that he evolved into, it is this personal attribute which strikes the listener with an unimagined dynamic power.

Stravinsky composes only at the piano and his music seldom reflects his emotional inner feelings - or so one is led to think. However, there is so much that is purely beautiful in the music of Stravinsky that this is a point that will be long debated. As with all the great masters only time will give its final verdict to this controversial genius.

It was Samuel Dushkin the violinist who inspired much violin music to be written by Stravinsky. The three works heard on this record are all worked out in collaboration with Dushkin.

While Stravinsky was in Wiesbaden, Germany, Schott's director Willy Strecker asked Stravinsky to write a violin concerto for Dushkin. So successful was this collaboration that soon after Stravinsky began writing a whole series of works which he and Dushkin would use on tour, which they made together.

The first of these was the Duo Concertante given its first performance in Berlin 1932 (July 28th on the radio).

Stravinsky explains the basic problems of the work as follows: "after I had finished the concerto for violin and orchestra, which is as much an orchestral piece as a violin piece, I continued to explore the possibilities of the violin and specially its place in the chamber music ensemble. For years I had disliked the sounds produced in combination by the percussive strings of the piano and the strings vibrated by the bow. In order to accept this combination of instruments, I felt I had to use the smallest possible grouping i.e. two solo instruments, so as to find a way of solving the instrumental and acoustical problems arising from the alliance of two different types of strings. This is what the Duo concertante suggested for piano and violin. The wedding of the two instruments seem to make for greater clarity than the combination of piano with several stringed instruments which tends to sound like an orchestral ensemble."

The work itself in terms of its spiritual and formal structure has a connection with Charles-Albert Cingria's tribute to the memory of Petrarch, one phrase particularly struck Stravinsky. "Lyricism cannot exist without rules, and it is essential that they be strict, otherwise

there is only a faculty for lyricism and that exists everywhere, what does not exist everywhere is lyrical expression and composition".

As Oleggini says: "Stravinsky is referring to the lyricism of the Bucolic Poets of antiquity and their conscious artistic technique which gave the spirit and form to this Duo concertante. The theme he took runs through all five movements of the work, and these form a complete whole and produce what might be described as the musical parallel to the pastoral poetry of antiquity". The two Eclogues, which constitute the nucleus of the works are infused with the Arcadian feeling for nature. The initial Cantilena is melancholy and reminiscent of 17th century composers. The jig is very brilliant, violinistic and also pianistically interesting. And the Dithyrambe concludes on a note of transfiguration and ecstasy.

SUITE ITALIENNE

Based on a Ballet of themes by Pergolesi was suggested to Stravinsky by Diaghilev in 1919. It was the first of a series of works in which Stravinsky refers to the works of old masters and reconstitutes them in the mirror of his own personal idiom.

It is also one of his most controversial works. Stravinsky keeps the lines for the most part intact and only occasionally strings them together with a passage of his own.

Many of the original Bass parts are kept intact but the Stravinsky's touch is everywhere evident, such as the frequent use of extraneous notes and unresolved harmonic appoggiaturas, thereby creating dissonances which often startle the listener. Stravinsky's rhythmic peculiarities also make themselves felt. The squareness is often upset and the symmetry is broken up.

As a concert piece it is entirely successful and it is a testament to Stravinsky's genius that he has managed to fuse all the opposing ingredients, 17th century lyricism and 20th century dissonance into a unit of lasting value.

DIVERTIMENTO

Stravinsky was asked by Ida Rubenstein to compose a ballet for her. The "Fairy's Kiss" based on themes of Tschaikowsky and a plot by Stravinsky himself which he took from a Hans Andersen fairy story the "Ice Maiden" envolved.

The story tells how a fairy plants a magic kiss on a child and unneests him from his mother's arms. On the day of his wedding, his greatest happiness on earth, the fairy snatches the youth away from this world to prevue this happiness. Then the fairy gives him back his kiss. Stravinsky regards Tschaikowsky as the darling of the muses and hence his use of Tschaikowsky themes which had been suggested to him by the painter Alexander Benois. This is one of Stravinsky's most tender and lyrical works.

The suite from the ballet is called Divertiment and correspondes to the four parts of the ballet.