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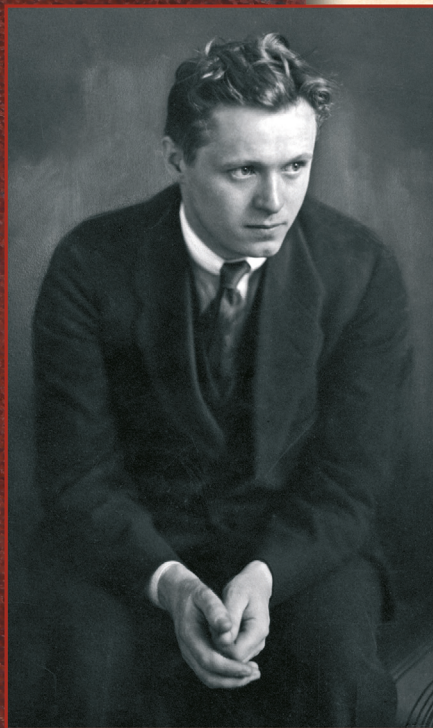
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HISTORICAL



Rudolf Serkin and Adolf Busch, 1930



# ADOLF BUSCH

## THE BERLIN RECORDINGS 1921-1929

BUSCH QUARTET  
BRUNO SEIDLER-WINKLER  
RUDOLF SERKIN

Bach  
Tartini  
Mozart  
Schubert  
Brahms  
Schumann  
Dvořák

**CD1** Adolf Busch, Bruno Seidler-Winkler [1-4], [7-18]; Adolf Busch [5-6]

- 1** **BRAHMS: Hungarian Dance No. 2 in D minor** (arr. Joachim) 2:50  
June 1921, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin  
Matrix: 255at - 78: 2-47921, 62355 (d/s), Nordisk Polyphon 2-47921 (d/s)
- 2** **BRAHMS: Hungarian Dance No. 20 in D minor** (arr. Joachim) 2:02  
June 1921, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin  
Matrix: 256at - 78: 2-47922, 62355 (d/s), Nordisk Polyphon 2-47922 (d/s)
- 3** **CORELLI: Sonata in G minor, Op. 5, No. 5: Adagio** (arr. Busch) 3:09  
June 1921, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin  
Matrix: 233av - 78: B-27501, 65601 (d/s)
- 4** **DVOŘÁK: Slavonic Dance in A flat major, Op. 46, No. 3, B78** (arr. Press) 4:06  
June 1921, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin  
Matrix: 235av - 78: B-27510, 68062 (s/s), 65979 (d/s), Nordisk Polyphon 27510 (d/s)
- 5** **J. S. BACH: Partita in E major, BWV1006, for solo violin: Preludio** 3:16  
1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin  
Matrix: 769av - 78: B-27514, 68066 (s/s), 65981 (d/s), Japanese Polydor 40037 (d/s)
- 6** **J. S. BACH: Partita in E major, BWV1006, for solo violin: Gavotte en Rondeau** 2:44  
June 1921, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin  
Matrix: 236av - 78: B-27502, 65601 (d/s), B-27548, 65982 (d/s), Japanese Polydor 40037 (d/s)
- 7** **TARTINI: Sonata in G major, Op. 2, No. 12: Adagio** (arr. Corti) 3:05  
1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin  
Matrix: 850at - 78: B-7506, 67534 (s/s), 62468 (d/s), Vocalion A-60059 (d/s),  
Japanese Polydor 30002 (d/s)
- 8** **DVOŘÁK: Romantic Piece, Op. 75, No. 4, B150: Larghetto** 3:01  
1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin  
Matrix: 851at - 78: B-7507, 67535 (s/s), 62469 (d/s), Vocalion A-60057 (d/s)  
NB: Disc labels erroneously describe this piece as 'Adagio'

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takes, probably because Busch never received a test of it. Had he heard this beautiful performance, he would surely have rejected it, because of one inadvertent bounce of the bow. As it was, this lone 1928 master lay unnoticed in the archives for almost seven decades.

On 11 June 1929, the Duo returned to the studios with engineer Stanley Tunn to wax Bach's Sonata in G major, BWV1021, of which they had given the modern premiere two days earlier. Busch also made a second attempt at the Partita, on six sides, the *Allemande* and *Courante* both going on Side 1 and the *Chaconne* being allotted three sides. The single take of the *Gigue* survives as a test pressing and is a prime example of his art, better poised rhythmically than the version which was released. The sound is also exceptional, with so lifelike a 'presence' that it is easy to understand why the recording did not pass the factory wear test. By the early autumn of 1929 HMV had finally agreed that Busch would receive a five per cent royalty on sales, and that both Bach works would be redone. At this stage the company also hoped to remake all or part of the Beethoven Sonata; but Kreisler and Rachmaninoff had recorded it for Victor in America a month before the Busch-Serkin session and, under a reciprocal agreement, the Victor performance was available to HMV-Electrola. There was thus no incentive for the company to spend more time on the Busch-Serkin one.

Busch's first fully fruitful HMV session took place at the Berlin Singakademie on 24 October 1929: with Tunn again in charge of the equipment, he and Serkin cut a successful version of the Bach G major Sonata. As before, they used the edition Busch had recently published, making it a doubly historic recording. Serkin wished to remain anonymous, as the Sonata was one with basso continuo and he did not want to be thought of as Busch's accompanist; but his name appeared on the labels. On 8 November, Busch joined Tunn at the Beethovensaal in Berlin to record the Bach Partita, again on six sides: the fifth one did not please him and he made two further takes of it on the 11th. This final version of the Partita was only the second published recording of a complete unaccompanied Bach violin work (following Henri Marteau's 1912-13 set of the E major Partita) and the first electric one – Busch achieved the latter distinction by just one day, as on the 12th his thirteen-year-old pupil Yehudi Menuhin, who had been preparing the C major Sonata with him, recorded it in London. Although Busch's performance of the mighty *Chaconne* involves some tempo changes, they are spontaneous and organic: at times he seems to take off into outer space, so rapt is his spiritual exaltation.

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|----|--|------|
| 9  | <b>GOSSEC: <i>Gavotte</i> from 'Rosine'</b> (arr. Burmester)<br>1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin<br>Matrix: 852at 78: B-7508, 67536 (s/s), 62470 (d/s), 20074 (d/s), Vocalion B-60057 (d/s), Japanese Polydor 30002                             | 1:58 |
| 10 | <b>KREISLER: 'Dittersdorf' <i>Scherzo</i></b><br>1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin<br>Matrix: 853at 78: B-7509, 67537 (s/s), 62470 (d/s), 20074 (d/s)<br>NB: Disc labels give composer as Dittersdorf, in accordance with Schott edition.        | 2:35 |
| 11 | <b>SCHUMANN: <i>Kinderszenen, Op. 15: Träumerei</i></b> (arr. Hüllweck)<br>1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin<br>Matrix: 854at - 78: B-7510, 67538 (s/s), 62468 (d/s)   | 3:22 |
| 12 | <b>PORPORA: <i>Aria in E major</i></b> (arr. Corti)<br>1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin<br>Matrix: 855at - 78: B-7511, 67539 (s/s), 62469 (d/s), Vocalion B-60059 (d/s)<br>NB: DG disc labels give composer as 'Porpoza'.                       | 3:00 |
| 13 | <b>DVOŘÁK: <i>Slavonic Dance in G minor, Op. 46, No. 8, B78</i></b> (arr. Press)<br>1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin<br>Matrix: 766av - 78: B-27511, 68063 (s/s), 65980 (d/s)   | 3:24 |
| 14 | <b>DVOŘÁK: <i>Slavonic Dance in G minor, Op. 46, No. 8, B78</i></b> (arr. Press)<br>June 1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin - 1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin<br>Matrix: 766 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> av - 78: Test pressing         | 3:25 |
| 15 | <b>KREISLER: 'Tartini' <i>Variations on a Theme of Corelli</i></b><br>1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin<br>Matrix: 767av - 78: B-27512, 68064 (s/s), 65980 (d/s)<br>NB: Disc labels give composer as Tartini, in accordance with Schott edition. | 2:59 |
| 16 | <b>DVOŘÁK: <i>Humoresque in G flat major, Op. 101, No. 7, B187</i></b> (arr. Wilhelmj)<br>1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin<br>Matrix: 768av - 78: B-27513, 68065 (s/s), 65979 (d/s)   | 3:08 |

- [7] **KREISLER: 'Pugnani' Præliudium and Allegro** 4:59  
 1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin  
 Matrix: 770av - 78: B-27515, 68067 (s/s), 65981 (d/s), Nordisk Polyphon 27510 (d/s)  
 NB: Disc labels give composer as Pugnani, in accordance with Schott edition.
- [18] **BRAHMS: Hungarian Dance No. 5 in G minor** (arr. Joachim) 2:16  
 1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin  
 Matrix: 771av - 78: B-27516, 68068 (s/s), 65982 (d/s), B-27547, 66308 (d/s)
- [CD2] **Busch Quartet – Adolf Busch violin, Gösta Andreasson violin,  
 Paul Doktor viola, Paul Grümmer cello [1-8];  
 Adolf Busch [9-10], [15-19]; Adolf Busch and Rudolf Serkin [11-14]**
- HOFSTETTER: 'Haydn' String Quartet in F major, Op. 3, No. 5**
- [1] I. *Presto* 2:53  
 [2] II. *Andante cantabile* 4:02  
 [3] III. *Menuett* 3:19  
 [4] IV. *Scherzando* 2:50  
 1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin  
 Matrices: 772/5av - 78: B-29000/3, 72791/4 (s/s), 72791 and 72793 (d/s)  
 NB: Disc labels give composer as Haydn, in accordance with printed editions.
- [5] **MOZART: String Quartet in D major, K575: Andante** 4:58  
 1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin  
 Matrices: 776av -78: B-29004/5, 72795/6 (s/s), 72795 (d/s)
- [6] **MOZART: String Quartet in D major, K575: Menuetto** 4:10  
 1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin  
 Matrices: 777av - 78: B-29004/5, 72795/6 (s/s), 72795 (d/s)
- [7] **VERDI: String Quartet in E minor: Prestissimo** 2:32  
 1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin  
 Matrix: 778av - 78: B-29006, 72797 (s/s), 72797 (d/s)

– and if, in the heat of the moment, he forgot to make the appropriate move, the producer standing behind him was liable to push or pull him into position.

In the circumstances, Busch's first efforts were heroic, revealing quite a carefree young fiddler in comparison with the serious artist of the 1930s. The more time passes, the more valuable these records seem to be, as documents of his violinistic mastery in his Berlin period. All the titles save four are unique in his discography and virtually every one displays an interesting facet of his playing. To modern ears, the most noticeable aspect will be Busch's use of portamenti, the swoops and scoops of which he was a master. The solo Bach items are practical demonstrations of the principles enshrined in his 1919 edition of the Sonatas and Partitas; the performance of Kreisler's best piece, the *Præliudium and Allegro*, has added importance because the composer did not record it; and the Busch Quartet sides are historically significant, apart from their intrinsic musical value.

Although his experiences with the acoustic process made Busch even more suspicious of recording than he had been at the start, he agreed to cut a further series for Deutsche Grammophon early in 1926. These sessions were cancelled owing to illness and by the time he was well enough to return to the studios, he was being wooed by Electrola, the firm set up in 1926 to replace DG as HMV's German affiliate. The connection with DG was allowed to lapse; and more time went by, while Busch's agents negotiated with Electrola – and through that firm with its London principal His Master's Voice (The Gramophone Company, Limited). The Columbia Graphophone Company was also keen to sign Busch up. One problem was that, although Busch had been appearing in London again since 1925, he was not well known to the influential HMV producer Fred Gaisberg, an American obsessed with Fritz Kreisler. In Busch's favour was Electrola's wish to have Germany's top violinist represented in the domestic catalogue; and after his move to Switzerland in 1927, the music publishers Gebrüder Hug – who had a connection with HMV – were anxious to see him recorded. There was talk of the Beethoven Concerto, with the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra and Volkmar Andreae, but HMV International Artistes' Department was not interested. As negotiations dragged on for two years, Busch's playing was not documented in the mid-1920s, when he was at his peak.

By 1928 HMV had won his agreement to make records of sonatas; and on Monday 23 April he and Serkin went to the Electrola studios in Berlin. There, with the British engineer Douglas Larter from company headquarters at Hayes, they spent the morning recording Beethoven's 'Little G major' Sonata, Op. 30, No. 3. In the afternoon Busch set down Bach's D minor solo Partita on eight 12-inch sides, one for each of the first four movements and four for the *Chaconne*. What was amiss with these 1928 records is not known – Take 1 of the Bach *Gigue* was broken during processing but Take 2 was undamaged. Initially a 'make-up' session was scheduled so that a few sides could be redone; but in the end, only Take 2 of the Bach *Sarabande* survived from a total of 25



Bruno Seidler-Winkler



Adolf Busch and Rudolf Serkin, 1928

- 8 **SCHUBERT: String Quartet in G major, D887: Scherzo: Allegro vivace** 4:29  
 1922, Deutsche Grammophon Studios, Berlin  
 Matrix: 779av - 78: B-29007, 72798 (s/s), 72797 (d/s)
- 9 **J. S. BACH: Partita in D minor, BWV 1004, for solo violin: Sarabanda** 3:37  
 23 April 1928, Electrola Studios, Berlin  
 Matrix: CL 4055-II - 78: Test pressing
- 10 **J. S. BACH: Partita in D minor, BWV 1004, for solo violin: Giga** 1:57  
 11 June 1929, Electrola Studios, Berlin  
 Matrix: CN 598-I - 78: Test pressing
- J. S. BACH: Sonata in G major, bwv1021 (arr. Busch, Blume)**
- 11 I. *Adagio* 2:32  
 12 II. *Vivace* 0:53  
 13 III. *Largo* 3:19  
 14 IV. *Presto* 1:17  
 24 October 1929, Singakademie, Berlin  
 Matrices: CNR 808-III, 809-II - 78: DB 1434, JD 2006
- J. S. BACH: Partita in D minor, bwv1004, for solo violin**
- 15 I. *Allemanda* 2:28  
 16 II. *Corrente* 1:22  
 17 III. *Sarabanda* 3:31  
 18 IV. *Giga* 1:49  
 19 V. *Ciaccona* 12:59  
 8 and 11 November 1929, Beethovensaal, Berlin  
 Matrices: CNR 835-II, 836-I, 837-I, 838-II, 839-IV, 840-II  
 78: DB 1422/4 (32-1417/22), DB 7193/5, 7554/6 (M 133), 7557/9 (AM 133),  
 ND 352/4 (JAS 87)

## ADOLF BUSCH'S BERLIN SESSIONS

Had it not been for World War I, the great German violinist Adolf Busch would surely have recorded earlier. As it was, at the age of 29 he made the first celebrity violin solos for the independent Deutsche Grammophon Aktiengesellschaft, after the War and the firm's severance from HMV. He was contracted to record six titles and that first session was successful enough for him to be asked to make a further series of a dozen solo sides, plus eight sides with his Quartet. For the discs with piano, his accompanist was the company's musical director Bruno Seidler-Winkler. The sessions took place in Berlin, during the period when Busch lived there, 1918–22. This release marks the first time all these historic recordings have been reissued together. The metal masters were destroyed during the Third Reich, when Busch was persona non grata in his native country because of his principled stand against the Hitler regime.

DG's ledgers were lost in World War II but it has been established that the first sessions were held in 1921; and as it is known that Busch was recording at the DG studios on 1 and 2 June, the initial six sides were surely made then. The second set of sessions, spread over two or three days, began with Busch setting down six 10-inch and six 12-inch sides on his own or with Seidler-Winkler. The Busch Quartet then cut eight 12-inch sides. These sessions were held in the spring of 1922 at the earliest, as the players did not have the Verdi E minor in their repertoire until then. The Quartet and pianist Rudolf Serkin were involved in a concert by Deutsche Grammophon artists at the firm's headquarters in Berlin on 26 September 1922, in the midst of a hectic tour, so it is clear that the recordings had been completed by then, the second series of sessions having taken place during the summer. Two takes were probably made of each title; but only one alternate take has survived, as a test pressing: matrix 766<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>av of Dvořák's G minor *Slavonic Dance*, Op. 46, No. 8.

Although no longer linked with HMV, Deutsche Grammophon could still use the 'dog and horn' trademark for domestic issues, emblazoned 'Schallplatte "Grammophon"'. For export pressings, in the interregnum before the Polydor label was introduced, DG used the 'dogless horn' label with the superscription 'Gramophone-Record'. Busch's first four titles – the Brahms-Joachim *Hungarian Dances* Nos. 2 and 20, Corelli *Adagio* and Bach *Gavotte en Rondeau* – came out on two double-sided discs, one 10-inch and one 12-inch, with the black Schallplatte 'Grammophon' label. The 10-inch disc had HMV-style catalogue numbers but the 12-inch was numbered in the new DG style. A planned third disc could not be issued because one 12-inch side had been rejected or damaged – no one knows what the missing title was. The Dvořák-Press *Slavonic Dance* No. 3 therefore remained unissued at this stage.

The solo sides from the 1922 sessions were issued initially as six 10-inch and six 12-inch single-sided discs, on the purple Schallplatte 'Grammophon' label. Export pressings bore the 'dogless horn' logo. The odd title from

1921, the *Slavonic Dance* No. 3, was added to make a seventh 12-inch disc. The Quartet titles were issued as eight single-sided discs on the red Schallplatte 'Grammophon' label. When a double-sided issue of the 1922 recordings was planned, the Bach *Gavotte en Rondeau* from 1921 was brought in to make up the numbers: both it and the *Slavonic Dance* No. 3 were coupled with titles from 1922, the *Gavotte en Rondeau* now going with Brahms's *Hungarian Dance* No. 5. For the double-sided releases, the solo titles moved to the black label, while their export editions were on the new Polydor black label; but the Quartet titles retained red labels, Schallplatte 'Grammophon' for domestic buyers, Polydor for export. The *Hungarian Dance* No. 5 was further used as a filler for Brahms's First Symphony.

Artistically the Deutsche Grammophon sessions were a success, even if the acoustic process did not convey the full force of Busch's tone and personality. In those days it was not thought commercially viable to record entire works and instrumentalists were required to serve up a diet of snippets and genre pieces. Among Busch's acoustic records the sole extended work was the 'Serenade' Quartet (attributed to Haydn but now re-assigned to Hofstetter); only excerpts of quartets by Mozart, Schubert and Verdi were set down. Busch, who generally would not perform individual movements of masterpieces for love or money, hated such restrictions. He did record a few worthwhile fragments but it was uncharacteristic for him to play trifles by Kreisler, Gossec and Schumann – the kind of music he called *Dönchen*, Rhenish dialect for 'little tunes'. This repertoire reflected the taste of the time, when every prominent violinist was expected to give 'celebrity' recitals. For such a concert Busch would employ an accompanist, while for a sonata evening he would insist on a pianist of his own fighting weight. In his early celebrity recitals he used arrangements by other fiddlers such as Burmester, Corti, Hüllweck, Kreisler and Wilhelmj but gradually shed them, retaining short pieces by favourite composers – Reger, Paganini, Brahms or Dvořák – and building up a stock of his own transcriptions. He was stimulated in this endeavour by the realisation, shared by such style-conscious colleagues as Enescu but not confirmed until 1935, that many of Kreisler's 'arrangements' were original creations.

His acoustic discs documented the sound of his 1716 Stradivarius, less refulgent than that of the 1732 instrument heard on his electric records. Bruno Seidler-Winkler was an excellent accompanist who no doubt helped him to overcome his nerves – bad enough before a concert, let alone when faced with the recording horn. Although the acoustic process had been refined by this time, it was still primitive, with volume partly controlled by the player's proximity to the horn. The pianist had his stool and piano jacked up several feet off the floor, to bring the sounding board closer to the horn; and the violinist had to stand squarely in one place, doing his best not to indulge in the upper-body movement so necessary to a string player, in case he took the violin too far from the horn. When he wished to increase or decrease the volume to any great degree, he had to step forward or backward