

Johannes BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Double Concerto for Violin, Cello and Orchestra in A minor, Op.102

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 1 | I. Allegro | 15:07 |
| 2 | II. Andante | 7:52 |
| 3 | III. Vivace non troppo – Poco meno allegro – Tempo I | 7:47 |

ADOLF BUSCH violin, HERMANN BUSCH cello
ORCHESTRE NATIONAL DE LA RADIODIFFUSION FRANÇAISE
PAUL KLETZKI conductor
Recorded: 21 June 1949

Violin Concerto in D minor, Op.77

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 4 | I. Allegro non troppo | 20:28 |
| 5 | II. Adagio | 9:39 |
| 6 | III. Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace – Poco piu presto | 7:44 |

ADOLF BUSCH violin
ERWEITERTES ORCHESTER DER BASLER ORCHESTERGESELLSCHAFT
HANS MÜNCH conductor
Recorded: 18 December 1951



**ADOLF
BUSCH**

BRAHMS

**Double Concerto
Violin Concerto**

**Hermann Busch, cello
Orchestre National
de la Radiodiffusion
Française
PAUL KLETZKI**

**Orchester der
Stadt Basel
HANS MÜNCH**

Recorded 1949 & 1951




A GUILD HISTORICAL RELEASE

- Recordings from BrüderBuschArchiv in the Max-Reger-Institut, Karlsruhe
- Remastering: Peter Reynolds
- Final master preparation: Reynolds Mastering, Colchester, England
- Photos: BrüderBuschArchiv in the Max-Reger-Institut, Karlsruhe
- Design: Paul Brooks, paulmbrooks@virginmedia.com
- Art direction: Guild GmbH
- Executive co-ordination: Guild GmbH

- **Guild GmbH, Bärenholzstrasse 8, 8537 Nussbaumen/TG, Switzerland**
Tel: +41 (0) 52 742 85 00 Fax: +41 (0) 52 742 85 09 (Head Office)
- **Guild GmbH, PO Box 5092, Colchester, Essex CO1 1FN, Great Britain**
- **e-mail: info@guildmusic.com World WideWeb-Site: <http://www.guildmusic.com>**

WARNING: Copyright subsists in all recordings under this label. Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording thereof in any manner whatsoever will constitute an infringement of such copyright. In the United Kingdom licences for the use of recordings for public performance may be obtained from Phonographic Performances Ltd., 1 Upper James Street, London W1F 9EE.



Guild
HISTORICAL

**ADOLF
BUSCH**

**THE BERLIN
RECORDINGS
1921-1929**

BUSCH QUARTET
BRUNO SEIDLER-WINKLER
RUDOLF SERKIN

**Bach
Tartini
Mozart
Schubert
Brahms
Schumann
Dvořák**

GHCD 2406-07



Guild
HISTORICAL

**ADOLF
BUSCH**

**BEETHOVEN
Violin Concerto**

STATSRADIOFONIENS
SYMFONIORKESTER
Conducted by
LAUNY GRØNDAHL

**Romance in G
Romance in F**

WOR RADIO ORCHESTRA
conducted by
ALFRED WALLENSTEIN

Recorded 1949 & 1942

GHCD 2395

Adolf Busch has regularly been labelled the legitimate successor of Joseph Joachim. Not only was young Adolf in occasional contact with the famed violinist, but through his teachers Willy Hess and Bram Eldering he was also thoroughly “infected” by Joachimian idealism, thinking and music-making. Eldering had frequently met Brahms and had played all three of the violin sonatas with the composer in private, and Hess had been another of Joachim’s famous pupils. Even Busch’s composition teacher Fritz Steinbach was a strong Brahms exponent, one of the most intimate connoisseurs of the symphonies, on which he had meticulously worked with the composer. Naturally enough, one of the regularly recurring elements in Busch’s music making was, apart from Bach and Beethoven, Brahms’s music. Brahms’s Violin Concerto was an important piece during his period of studying at the Cologne Conservatoire (he heard performances played by Leopold Auer and Marie Soldat-Roeger in his early years), and both the Violin Concerto and the Double Concerto became important calling-cards in Busch’s career from its very beginning. Eventually Brahms’s Violin Concerto also became the last work Busch performed in public. During the development of his career, over the stages Vienna, Berlin, Darmstadt, Basel and America, Brahms’s music, both the Violin Concerto and the chamber music, remained regularly in the Busch’s focus, and he not only performed the works frequently, but also produced studio recordings of several of the chamber music compositions. The Violin Concerto and the Double Concerto have come down to us only in live performances, the Violin Concerto in broadcasts from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. As Berthold Goldschmidt reported much later, ‘Busch was always considered (...) as a typical German musician and fiddler, the one and only interpreter of Beethoven and Brahms.’

One of the events where Busch appeared was the Strasbourg Music Festival which had been founded as early as 1932 (the very year when Adolf Busch also first appeared in a Strasbourg Busch Quartet concert featuring Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven), and one of the figureheads in early years was conductor Charles Münch, a cousin to conductor Hans Münch. After the Second World War the festival was revived first in 1947, and when Adolf Busch returned to Europe in 1947, the Konzertgesellschaft Zurich being his most important concert agent (additional enquiries were turned down systematically), one of these engagements was three concerts in Strasbourg, on occasion of the 11th Strasbourg Music Festival, subtitled ‘Festival de Musique Romantique’. Adolf’s pianist son-in-law Rudolf Serkin (who also shone in Schumann’s Piano Concerto under Ernest Bour on 18 June) and the Busch Quartet performed on 11 June 1949 Schubert’s ‘Trout’ Piano Quintet in A major, Mendelssohn Bartholdy’s E minor Capriccio for String Quartet, and Brahms’s Piano Quartet in G minor, Op. 25. Two days later, the Busch Quartet, enlarged by violist Albert Bertschmann and cellist August Wenzinger, performed Schumann’s A minor String Quartet, Op. 41 no. 1 and Brahms’s String Sextet in B flat major, Op. 18; all these performances have survived, most of them in private collections. The final concert of the festival, on 21 June, featuring the

Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française and conducted by Polish conductor Paul Kletzki (1900–1973), starred Adolf Busch and his brother Hermann, in Brahms's Double Concerto in A minor Op. 102. Kletzki (whose original spelling Klecki is to be found on the festival programme) had fled Germany in 1933 first for Italy, and via the Soviet Union (where he had moved to in 1936) only in 1939 arrived in Switzerland, assisted by Arturo Toscanini and Adolf Busch. Due to his Swiss wife he was able to attain the Swiss Citizenship in 1947 (his estate now is at the Zurich Zentralbibliothek). In the post-war years Kletzki was a renowned conductor, especially of the music of Gustav Mahler. In 1954 he was appointed chief conductor of the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, between 1958 and 1961 he was principal conductor of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and from 1966 until 1970 he was the General Music Director of the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande.

The concert, which took place at the art-nouveau Palais des Fêtes and which, apart from the Brahms Double Concerto, consisted of music by Brahms, Schumann (Fourth Symphony) and Liszt, proved to be one of the highlights of the festival, the musical contributions of Kletzki and the Busch brothers being hailed by the press as some of the most outstanding achievements. Hermann's wife Lotte recalled the day to have been a 'very hot and sweltering' one, and the concert began only at 8.30 p.m. As Tully Potter has stressed elsewhere, the French wind players must have found it hard to stay in tune, and the string players' fingers must have been 'perilously sticky, although you would never know it from the astounding performance' from all participants. The spiritedness and profundity of the performance, with a well-attuned feeling of unity between the soloists and a particularly charming rendering of the *Andante* movement, has as a particular feature the way the musicians 'avoid clumping down on the beat of the finale' (Potter). As always since 1925, Busch played his 'ex-Wiener' 1732 Stradivarius. In both performances recorded here, Busch performed on gut D, A and E strings.

Adolf Busch's health had always been somewhat fragile; in early years he had regularly to spend periods of rest in the Swiss Alps. After his first wife Frieda had died in August 1946 (followed only two months later by his granddaughter Susan's deadly accident), he was taken care of by Frieda's schoolfriend Dr. Hedwig Vischer, whom he married (much to Arturo Toscanini's dismay) as early as on 1 September 1947. On 2 January 1950 he suffered his second heart attack (after a first one nine years previously), followed by more illnesses and accidents that restricted his possibilities to perform considerably. In 1951 Adolf Busch had to experience his brothers Fritz and Willi dying within half a year, and by no means considerably stronger than either of them, he suffered two consecutive heart attacks on 30 December 1951. Death reached him as soon as on 9 June 1952, just three days after he had completed his last important composition, a setting of Psalm 6, Op. 70. Busch's last public performance had been in Basle on 18 December 1951, and the programme of this concert had been a most attractive one. The enlarged Orchestra of the Basler Orchestergesellschaft (leader Fanz Gellért), conducted by the figurehead of

Basle musical life, Hans Münch (1893–1983), performed Schumann (the Fourth Symphony), the Brahms Violin Concerto, and (as a premiere performance) Adolf Busch's Three Studies Op. 55 for orchestra, in the subscription concert of the Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft Basel (the programme also being given on 17 December). The 18 December concert, which was broadcast live, received excellent reviews, Otto Maag pointing out in the *National-Zeitung* that nothing more needed to be said about Busch's advocacy of Brahms's Violin Concerto than that he had been performing it for forty years and knew it by heart. 'We know no musician', Maag writes, 'who performs this work as much as a custodian of the Joachimian heritage as Busch does. In his presentation the second movement outgrows its inner substance. What appealed to us in his great performance exceptionally was the performer's impetuous youthfulness who refuses unwaveringly to age and still looks as fresh as several years ago. It would require scientific measures to examine as to whether the performer or the composer Busch was applauded more – in any case are we more than happy to call him one of ours.' Also the *Basler Nachrichten* (reviewer 'm.') stressed, after a lengthy appraisal of Busch's composition and its performance through orchestra and conductor, that there 'can be no higher praise than to testify that he was once more able to immerse [Brahms's] immortal composition into an entirely new lustre. Due to the incredible intensity of experience with which Busch informs the work, his unmatched commitment, particularly the *Adagio* became a revelation for which we only can thank him, stricken and shaken by this musical experience.' Although other violinists also closely associated with Brahms performed the Violin Concerto rather differently, Busch was undoubtedly an important exponent, admired by a number of musicians whose own renderings had gratified the composer – in comparison to Huberman, for example, Hedi Kloiber described Busch's rendering as 'deeply religious'. Busch had written his own cadenza in 1933, which was published that very year by Breitkopf & Härtel, just before Busch became a *persona non grata* in Germany; and although in the finale the interpretation may lack the sheer brilliance of virtuosity of earlier years, we have a sound document of lasting value. The after-concert party after this most successful concert lasted until 2 a.m.

© Jürgen Schaarwächter, 2015
BrüderBuschArchiv in the Max-Reger-Institut Karlsruhe