

DVOŘÁK

Violin Concerto in A minor, Op.53
Romance in F minor, Op.11

SZYMANOWSKI

Violin Concerto No.1, Op.35

ARABELLA STEINBACHER

Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin
MAREK JANOWSKI



SUPER AUDIO CD

HYBRID MULTICHANNEL

Deutschlandradio Kultur

Karol Szymanowski (1882 – 1937)

Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 35 (1916)

1	Vivace assai	12. 33
2	Vivace scherzando	8. 35
3	Cadenza (by Pawel Kochański)	1. 55
4	Allegro moderato	3. 02

Antonin Dvořák (1841 – 1904)

Romance for Violin and Orchestra in F minor, Op. 11 (1873 – 1879)

5	Andante con moto	11. 44
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Violin Concerto in A minor, Op. 53 (1880, rev. 1882)

6	Allegro ma non troppo	11. 51
7	Adagio ma non troppo	10. 30
8	Finale – Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo	11. 12

Arabella Steinbacher, violin

Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin

Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin

conducted by: **Marek Janowski**

Recording venue : Haus des Rundfunks, Berlin (5/2009)

Executive producers : Stefan Lang & Job Maarse

Recording producer : Job Maarse

Balance engineer : Jean-Marie Geijssen

Recording engineer : Roger de Schot

Editing : Roger de Schot

Total playing time: 71. 44

A co-production between Deutschlandradio Kultur, Rundfunk-Orchester und Chöre GmbH Berlin, and PentaTone Music

Deutschlandradio Kultur



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"Would you please write me a violin concerto? A truly original one, full of melodies and written for good violinists? Please, drop me a line!"

These words in a letter from the publisher Simrock to , dated January 27, 1879, resulted in the composition of his Violin Concerto in A minor. Although Dvořák concluded the work towards the end of the summer of 1879, after completing his exceedingly successful Slavonic Dances, a further four years would pass before the violin concerto finally appeared in print and actually received its première. With his reference to "good violinists", Simrock (ever on the lookout for a good business deal) probably had one person in particular in mind: Joseph Joachim. Two years previously, this violinist – who nowadays would enjoy the status of a megastar – had "launched" the violin concerto written by Johannes Brahms, following a period of intensive collaboration with the composer. So it seemed only logical that Dvořák – who was now also gaining an international reputation – would write the next concerto specifically for the famous virtuoso. During the summer, Dvořák and Joachim spent some "pleasant and delight-

ful moments" together in Berlin. It seemed as if nothing would stand in the way of a rewarding and steady collaboration. Thus in the autumn of 1879, Joachim received the manuscript of the concerto. However, apart from his thanks for the dedication, his reaction was mainly to send back a list of requests for massive changes in both the formal structure of the work and the solo violin part. After meeting personally with him in April 1880, Dvořák decided to fundamentally revise the work, which he concluded the following May. Joachim's words must have had a significant effect on Dvořák, as the latter wrote the following to Simrock: "I have revised the entire concerto, not a single bar have I retained". The second version was again sent to Joachim – however, the violinist did not react. At least, not straight away. Finally, some two years later in August 1882, the answer arrived. Once again with requests for changes, which Dvořák implemented without complaint. (The well-known Dvořák-scholar, Klaus Döge, described Joachim's conduct quite drastically as "downright neglectful"). Following a concert held in Berlin (which was not accessible to the general public) in which Joachim gave a performance of the work, further cuts were planned. They were the last. In 1883, Simrock published the concerto, which

finally received its première in Prague that year, on October 14. And the soloist was ... František Ondříček! So no trace of Joseph Joachim, who had played a leading role in the shaping of the composition. In fact, despite being the dedicatee of the concerto, Joachim never even played the work in public... A very peculiar end to a long story.

Although the labour pains involved in the composition of the work are not audible, it definitely demands to be performed by "good violinists". The construction of the work is traditional, on the whole; however, the inner structure presents solutions that are absolutely unique to the composer. Thus, for example, in the first movement Dvořák combines elements from the sonata form with a rondo. The first theme begins unisono in the striking orchestral tutti, after which the solo violin immediately takes over the cantabile postscript. The extremely abbreviated "recapitulation" is followed by a transition, which immediately leads into the Adagio. Here, the violin takes over: tranquil, cantabile, almost melancholy, yet with caution. The ensuing Finale in A major is geared entirely to national dances: together, the furiant and the dumka provide an interplay of turbulent and lyrical sections.

Dvořák's Romance in F minor, Op. 11 dates from 1877. It received its première

in Prague on December 9, 1877, and was dedicated to Dvořák's "dear friend František Ondříček". The work was not originally written for "concert performance", to quote Dvořák in a letter to Simrock; rather, it was an arrangement of the slow movement from his String Quartet in F minor. The mainly lyrical character of the work is written in three-part Lied-form, and provides the soloist with the opportunity to display both his cantabile and virtuoso talents.

Karol Szymanowski (1882 – 1937) was born in the Ukraine to prosperous parents, and grew up in highly artistic surroundings. As a result of extended trips to, for example, Berlin and Vienna at the beginning of the 20th century, the young Szymanowski – who had already presented to the public highly virtuoso piano compositions around the turn of the century – was noticeably influenced by German composers of the late-Romantic era, such as Reger and Strauss. Later on, the impressionist compositions of Ravel became important to him, and his intensive study of ancient Mediterranean cultures and oriental mystique shaped his further works. That Szymanowski once again raised the music of Poland from its backwardly provincial status to an international level is most definitely a direct result of his work in the field of Polish folk music

and folklore following the First World War. In both his opera King Roger and his Stabat mater, he created a new Polish idiom.

Szymanowski's Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 35, dating from 1916, has come a long way from the romance of Dvořák's composition. As are all his other violin works (!), it was written for his friend Paweł Kochański. However, following his emigration to the USA, Kochański was not able to give the première of the work, and thus Józef Oziminski was the soloist in Warsaw on the evening of November 1, 1922. Szymanowski wrote the following to Kochański in the USA: "The sound is so magical that the people here seemed frozen to the spot. And Pawełczek, just imagine, the violin comes out on top the whole time!" Kochański knew what he was talking about; after all, he had given Szymanowski all kinds of advice and support while the composer was completing the solo part. Shortly after the première, the Violin Concerto was already considered a masterpiece, and yet even today, it does not yet have the status allotted to other 20th-century masterpieces in this genre.

Luckily, a new generation of excellent violinists has taken it upon itself to promote this work, in order to re-establish it in the concert repertoire world-wide. Even if the structure of the violin concerto may seem



Antonín Dvořák

rather arbitrary (if not without structure!) upon first hearing, one is forced to acknowledge rapidly that the one-movement form is, in fact, meant simply to provide a handy precondition for the unbelievable lyrical power, the enormously distinctive expressive will and the ecstasy of this music. Here, the primary factor is not the presentation and development of themes or variations, or the contrapuntal finishing touch. Rather, Szymanowski creates varying colourful

worlds, allows non-thematic sound-fields to come up against tautly rhythmic sections – and allots the violin its place under the sun. Continuously, the solo part soars (and sings) high above the orchestra, as if improvised; it produces bird-calls, revels in sumptuous coloratura. Here, the listener senses a direct link to Tadeusz Miciński's poem *May Night*, by which Szymanowski had apparently been inspired. To be sure, this is not programme music, but rather a musical translation of

poetic inspiration in the form of a free fantasy. The orchestra employed is so large that the listener almost fears for the soloist: however, the subtle sound textures, reminiscent of Debussy and Ravel, soon disperse this fear. "Good violinists" can well assert themselves.

Franz Steiger

English translation: Fiona J. Stroker-Gale

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Arabella Steinbacher

Arabella Steinbacher made her international breakthrough in Paris in March 2004 with the Orchestre Philharmonique of Radio France, under conductor Sir Neville Marriner. She was given a tumultuous reception from the audience and the press wrote as follows: "A superior and fully mature performing artist, whose beauty of tone is overwhelming." Her career then took off rapidly, with concert performances under world-famous conductors such as Vladimir Fedossejev, Valery Gergiev, Fabio Luisi, Neeme Järvi, Sakari Oramo, Yuri Temirkanov, Lorin Maazel, Charles Dutoit, Christoph von Dohnányi and Marek Janowski.

In addition, she has given concerts with internationally reputed orchestras such as the Vienna Symphonic



Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the

Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, the Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra of Moscow Radio, the NHK Symphony Orchestra, and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

In Germany, Arabella Steinbacher regularly performs with most of the major orchestras, including the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra under Sir Colin Davis, the NDR Symphony Orchestra under Christoph von Dohnányi, the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig under Riccardo Chailly, the WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne under Andris Nelsons, the hr-Sinfonieorchester (= radio orchestra of the Hessischer Rundfunk) under Yakov Kreizberg, the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra under Marek Janowski, the Bavarian State Orchestra under Fabio Luisi and the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen (= German Chamber Philharmonic) under Herbert Blomstedt. Moreover, in 2008 she was the soloist for the opening concert of the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival. During this performance, which was broadcast live on television, she was again accompanied by the NDR Symphony Orchestra under Christoph von Dohnányi.

Significant international appearances include various débuts: e.g. at the London

Proms in July 2009 with the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra under Jonathan Nott; the Philharmonia and Philadelphia Orchestras, at the time under Charles Dutoit; the London Symphony Orchestra under Sir Colin Davis; the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Christoph von Dohnányi; the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra under Marek Janowski; and with the Orchestre de l'Opéra National de Paris under Christoph von Dohnányi. In 2009, she was invited to perform in London with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Lorin Maazel, and subsequently to tour Germany with the orchestra.

Arabella Steinbacher is a prizewinner of the Hanover Violin Competition, which is dedicated to Joseph Joachim. In 2001, she received the sponsorship prize of the free state of Bavaria, and that same year she was awarded a scholarship from the Anne-Sophie Mutter Foundation. From Anne-Sophie Mutter, who had supported her personally, she received a bow made by master luthier Benoit Rolland. In 2007, Arabella Steinbacher was awarded one of the most sought-after prizes in the profession: the "ECHO Klassik" award as "Young Artist of the Year".

Arabella Steinbacher was born in Munich in 1981 (her mother is Japanese, her father German). She received her first

violin lessons at the tender age of three, and was accepted six years later by Ana Chumachenko, as her youngest student, at the Munich Musikhochschule (= Academy of Music). To this day, Ana Chumachenko remains one of her closest friends. She continues to receive valuable musical inspiration and guidance from Ivry Gitlis.

Arabella Steinbacher plays the "Booth" Stradivarius (Cremona, 1716), loaned to her by the Nippon Music Foundation.

English translation: Fiona J. Stroker-Gale

Marek Janowski

Marek Janowski has been Artistic Director of the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin since 2002 and in 2005 he was also appointed Musical Director of the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande in Geneva. He is in demand as a guest conductor throughout the world, working on a regular basis in the USA with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (where he holds the Otto Klemperer Guest Conducting Chair), the Boston and San Francisco Symphony Orchestras, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and in Europe with the Orchestre de Paris,



the Orchester der Tonhalle Zürich, the Danish National Symphony Orchestra in Copenhagen and the NDR-Sinfonieorchester Hamburg. Born in 1939 in Warsaw and educated in Germany, Marek Janowski's artistic path led him from Assistant positions in Aachen, Cologne, Düsseldorf and Hamburg to his appointment as General Music Director in Freiburg im Breisgau (1973-75) and Dortmund (1975-79). Whilst in Dortmund, his reputation grew rapidly and he became greatly involved in the international opera scene. There is not one

world-renowned opera house where he has not been a regular guest since the late '70s, from the Metropolitan Opera New York to the Bayerischer Staatsoper Munich; from Chicago and San Francisco to Hamburg; from Vienna and Berlin to Paris. Marek Janowski stepped back from the opera scene in the 1990's in order to concentrate on orchestral work and was thus able to continue the great German conducting tradition in the symphonic repertoire. He now enjoys an outstanding reputation amongst the great orchestras of Europe and North America. He is recognised for his ability to create orchestras of international standing as well as for his innovative programmes and for bringing a fresh and individual interpretation to familiar repertoire. Between 1984 and 2000, as Musical Director of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Marek Janowski led the orchestra to international fame as the leading orchestra in France. From 1986 to 1990, in addition to his work in France, Janowski held the position of Chief Conductor of the Gürzenich-Orchester in Cologne, and between 1997 and 1999 he was also First Guest Conductor of the Deutsche Symphonie-Orchester Berlin. From 2000 to 2005 Janowski served as Music Director of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo, and from 2001 to 2003 he also

held the position of Chief Conductor with the Dresdner Philharmonie. Marek Janowski has made many recordings over the past 30 years, including many complete operas and symphonic cycles, many of which have been awarded international prizes. To this day, his recording of Richard Wagner's complete tetralogy *The Ring Cycle* with the Staatskapelle Dresden (1980-83) remains one of the most distinguished and musically interesting recordings that has been made of this work.

Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin

The Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin (RSB) is Germany's oldest orchestra belonging to a broadcasting organisation; the ensemble has existed since the very first hour of music programming on the radio in October, 1923. The orchestra's head conductors (including figures such as Sergiu Celibidache, Eugen Jochum, Hermann Abendroth, Rolf Kleinert, Heinz Rögner and Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos) developed an ensemble which was to go through the ups and downs of 20th century German history like no other orchestra in Germany. The symphonic repertoire of the RSB encompasses music from all stylistic eras between

pre-classicism and modernism, and contemporary repertoire has been given special attention by the orchestra ever since its establishment.

Since the beginning of Marek Janowski's involvement as artistic director and head conductor in 2002, the RSB has made a resounding international name for itself among Berlin's top orchestras and as one of Germany's leading radio orchestras.

Janowski's cyclical programming concepts of the past few years (focussed on Mozart, Hartmann, Wagner, Bartók, Bruckner and Strauss), the establishment of new and interesting concert venues, and a young, dynamic image all join to comprise the present-day self-definition of this oldest German radio symphony orchestra.

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