

THE ROMANTIC REVIVAL, that most provocative musical-programming phenomenon of recent years, seems to have been primarily concerned — so far at least — with the long-neglected works of once-famous *pianist*-composers: Alkan, Field, Henselt, Moscheles, Anton Rubinstein, Scharwenka, et al. The present recorded program is an attempt to give a little “equal time” to some even more neglected works by once no-less-famous virtuoso *violinist*-composers. The careers of two of these onetime public idols, the Hungarian Hubay and the Belgian Ysaÿe, extended so far into the twentieth century that many in the elder generation of today’s music-lovers may still remember their concert appearances and 78-rpm recordings (acoustical only in the case of Ysaÿe). But the Austrian Ernst, a contemporary and colleague of Berlioz, has long been no more than a faded name in music-reference works, and, to the best of the present annotator’s knowledge, none of his music ever was recorded before this. For that matter, the present Ysaÿe *poème* was a record first and the Hubay concerto the first complete recording (outside Hungary at least).

How just is this neglect of this music? How much are contemporary listeners missing by our nearly complete ignorance of it and its composers? After hearing the present examples such questions should be easy to answer: all of the superstars among the virtuoso fiddler-composers of the past have retained all of their powers of personality-projection and their ability to speak with persuasive eloquence for themselves.

The three composers represented on the first disc of this collection were themselves brilliant violinists, each remembered as one of the outstanding instrumentalists of his generation. Indeed, only one of the three — Georges Enesco — is thought of now as a serious composer; the names of both Joseph Joachim and Jenő Hubay are inseparable from that of their instrument, the former celebrated as a virtuoso performer, the latter remembered primarily as the teacher of great performers. Yet all three produced compositions not limited to the type intended to display their own violonistic prowess, and all three were of major significance in the area of pedagogy. (Joachim and Enesco earned further distinction as conductors.) A further common bond between them, unfortunately, is the almost total neglect of their music: except for the deservedly popular Rumanian Rhapsodies of Enesco, even the most serious music lover would be hard put to cite a single title by any of these three, let alone report having actually heard any of their music performed. These recordings by Aaron Rosand are offered as a

corrective to that situation, but not in that context alone, for, while the prime motivation for investigating the works of such figures may be their historical importance, at their best they reveal a musical substance beyond the concept of curiosity value.

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Joachim was a towering figure in Europe’s musical life for more than sixty years, the most highly regarded violinist of the period following the death of Paganini, but never thought of as a “mere” virtuoso. He was born June 28, 1831, at Kittsee (near the city known as Pozsony, Hungary, and Pressburg, Austria, prior to its present identity as Bratislava, Czechoslovakia); he died August 15, 1907, in Berlin, his home for the last forty years of his life. He began his studies at the age of five, first performed in public at seven, and at ten went to Vienna to study with the most renowned teachers of the time: Johann Georg Hellmesberger, Joseph Böhm, and Miska Hauser. Shortly after his twelfth birthday Joachim made his official debut in Leipzig, sharing a program with the mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot, with Felix Mendelssohn as his accompanist. The following year he made a sensational London debut; before he was twenty he played under both Mendelssohn and Liszt, and he soon added conducting to his other activities.

Paul David, in his *Grove’s* article on Joachim, advises that in his compositions “Joachim was essentially a follower of Schumann, and his style was developed in close association with his intimate friend, Brahms. Most of his works are of a grave, melancholy character — all of them, it need hardly be said, earnest in purpose and aiming at the ideal. His most important work, and the one which for a time was highly successful and seemed to his contemporaries to possess permanent vitality, is the Hungarian Concerto (Op. 11).” The concerto, composed in Hanover in the summer of 1857 but not performed until March 1860 (by Joachim himself, then still only twenty-eight years old), is the second of Joachim’s three violin concertos and the only one of his works with Hungarian characteristics.

Of all of the “forgotten” works of the Romantic era, this D minor concerto of Joachim is surely one of the most substantial. The listener expecting merely an elaborated *csárdás*-confection and/or a parcel of pyrotechnics will be in for a surprise, for the work is as melodically appealing and as craftsmanlike in its construction as, for example, the popular G minor concerto of Bruch, or the Vieuxtemps concertos that *are* performed still. Joachim, thoroughly cosmopolitan in experience and outlook, probably regarded the Hungarian element as an

exoticism despite his native familiarity with it, and did not allow it to crowd out the basic structural considerations that give the work its strength. The first movement is impeccably put together, so that the admittedly bravura display passages (of which there are many) sound by no means empty, and for so long a movement is a *Romanze*, again surprising for the elegance of the frame within which its affecting melodies are spun out. Formally a rondo, the final movement is a *perpetuum mobile* that is suitably fiery in character and builds to an utterly breathless climax after presenting a number of ingratiating gypsy tunes, which are embellished with obvious affection and great good humor.

As Joachim originally set it down, the D minor concerto is one of the longest violin concertos in the literature, its first movement alone longer than the entire G minor concerto of Bruch. In this performance, judicious minor cuts have been made in the outer movements, without eliminating any of its rich thematic content or in any way affecting its basic structure.

The two most celebrated violin pedagogues of the last hundred years (and possibly the most celebrated in violin history) were both Hungarians, both brilliant performers, and both numbered Joachim among their own teachers. One was Leopold Auer (1845-1930), who spent fifty years in Russia, where he had such musicians as Elman, Zimbalist, and Heifetz for pupils; he taught in New York for his last dozen years. The other was Jenő Hubay, who did his teaching in Budapest and whom every Hungarian violinist from café artists to the most distinguished virtuosi claimed as teacher; among his pupils were Eugene Ormandy, Joseph Szigeti, Emil Telmányi, and Yelley d'Arányi. Unlike Auer, who confined his creative efforts for the most part to cadenzas, transcriptions, and miniatures, Hubay was conspicuously active as a composer, with no fewer than six operas to his credit (including a treatment of *Anna Karenina* and, appropriately, *The Violin-Maker of Cremona* as well as a *Petőfi Symphony* for solo vocalists, chorus, and large orchestra.)

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Hubay was born in Budapest on September 15, 1858, and died there on March 12, 1937. His original name was Eugen Huber, but it was “Magyarized” early in his career. His first teacher was his father, *Kapellmeister* of the Hungarian National Opera and a professor of violin at the Budapest Conservatory, who allowed his youngster to play a Viotti concerto in public at the age of eleven but then wisely kept him from premature exploitation, sending him at thirteen to Berlin for five years of study with Joachim. By the time Hubay was twenty he had made

a successful debut in Paris, where he became a close friend of Vieuxtemps. (After Vieuxtemps' death in 1881, Hubay edited and completed several of his mentor's unpublished works). In 1882 he went to Brussels as principal professor at the Conservatoire, and four years later he returned to Budapest permanently, as successor to his father at that city's conservatory.

Like Joachim before him, Hubay was the recipient of many honors, including knighthood and a doctorate, and he also found a warm admirer in Brahms, but he went Joachim one better in organizing not one string quartet, but two — one in Brussels and one in Budapest. A more significant difference was that Hubay's own catalogue of compositions was much larger than Joachim's and included works on a more ambitious scale than Joachim had attempted.

While the present recording of the third of Hubay's four violin concertos is apparently the first complete one, there once was an American Columbian 78-rpm version by Mischa Elman of the second and third movements (the latter mercilessly cut) only. The work was first published in 1907 (with piano accompaniment only) and 1908 (in full orchestral score), dedicated to a pupil who later achieved considerable fame on his own, Franz de Vecsey.

The work begins with a boldly energetic, darkly colored Introduction quasi *Fantasia, Moderato*, common time, that gives the soloist ample opportunity to display technical expertise and declamatory eloquence as well as more frankly lyrical expressiveness. Its concluding *tutti* leads without pause into the high-spirited Scherzo, *Presto*, 3/4, where vivaciously staccato orchestral strings and woodwinds back up even more sparkling fireworks by the soloist. But the heart of the work is the Adagio movement, *Moderato*, common time, again darkly colored, but now far less a vehicle of virtuosity than a medium of fervent songfulness — uninhibitedly romantic, yet hard indeed for even the most hard-hearted anti-romanticist to resist. Showmanship takes over again, however, in the Finale, *Allegro con fuoco*, 3/4, in which the hard-driving first theme is given a brisk *fugato* workout before the soloist enters with a brief cadenza. Both soloist and orchestra do their best to exhaust the energy potentials of this theme, and even when the soloist is singing the lyrical second theme echoes of the first persist in the busily bubbling woodwinds underneath. Then there is another, longer, and even more dazzling cadenza before the exhilarating dash — with last appearances of both themes — to the finish line.

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Georges Enesco (still referred to as Enescu in his native Rumania, where the posthumous honors heaped upon him compare with those accorded Sibelius in Finland, and where the national orchestra bears his name) was born in Dorohoiu on August 19, 1881, and died in Paris on May 14, 1955. Recordings exist that attest to his consummate artistry as an interpreter of the works of Bach and Beethoven as well as his own music. Other recordings show him in his two performing roles and reflect his pedagogical activity: he was conductor in Yehudi Menuhin's recordings of concertos by Mozart and Dvořák, and soloist with him in the Bach Double Concerto under Monteux; Menuhin went to Paris to study with Enesco before he was in his teens, and is surely the most famous of all Enesco's pupils.

Enesco's own start was an early one, too. He entered the Vienna Conservatory at seven, then went to Paris at twelve to study with Massenet, Fauré, and Gédalge. Before he was eighteen his music had been played at the *Concerts Colonne* and he had launched his virtuoso career in earnest. (Fittingly, perhaps, his last recordings, made some fifty-five years later, were as conductor of the Colonne Orchestra, in the two Rumanian Rhapsodies of Op. 11.) In addition to his violin recitals, his conducting, and his teaching, Enesco composed a good deal of chamber music, three symphonies, and a large-scale opera, *Oedipe*. From the first, he identified himself as a national artist: his Opus 1 is a *Poème roumain*, his best-known works are the Rumanian Rhapsodies (1908) and the third violin sonata ("In the Rumanian Popular Style," Op. 45, 1926), and even his operatic setting of Sophocles' tragedy (1921–1936) has been declared "national music in the true sense of the word." The strain is discernible in the Prelude for Solo Violin, which antedates the Rumanian Rhapsodies by a year or so, but carries the mark of the born virtuoso, reveling in his self-imposed challenges.

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Forgotten though he may be nowadays, the Moravian violinist-composer Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst (1814–1865) was famous not only in his own day but for many years afterwards. He was one of the relatively few virtuoso executants of his time warmly admired by Berlioz, who not only praised him in *Journal des Débats* reviews but conducted for him on several occasions, once giving Ernst the solo viola part in a performance of *Harold in Italy* in Russia. Like the other two men featured here, Ernst was a prodigy, making his first concert tour at the age of sixteen. He studied with Böhm and Seyfried, later Mayseder, at the Vienna Conservatory, but

the dominant influence on him was that of Paganini, whose devoted fan Ernst was in his youth. He lived in Paris from 1832 to 1838, toured widely from 1838 to 1850, and settled in London in 1855, his public career cut short by illness. Ernst's entry in present-day reference works is now too brief to give the date (1849) of this concerto (which, along with an *Élégie*, *Othello-Phantasie*, and a *Carnaval de Venise*, is cited among his onetime best-known works), but it remained enough of a favorite to be republished, ed. Arno Hilf, in 1896, and again — in a revision by H. Marteau — in 1913. According to *Grove's Dictionary*, it is sometimes subtitled "Concerto pathétique."

There is a single movement only, *Allegro moderato*, common time, which probably *could* be analyzed as in sonata-form, but since the ballade-like opening has as many lyrical as declamatory thematic elements, and since what must be the true second theme doesn't appear for some four minutes, the predominant impression is that of a rhapsody, yet one by no means amorphous or loosely constructed. And while the influences of Berlioz and Paganini are not hard to spot, they are negligible in comparison with the vividness of Ernst's own personality — "captivating and dramatic" in Berlioz's apt description of his friend. Even the most bravura "display" writing is consistently subservient to strictly lyrical purposes, often taking the form of florid-arabesque decorations of the distinctive — poignantly nostalgic — melodism. Shortly before the end there is a *solo in moto di recitativo* passage and several *Lento* bars (horn calls and solo-violin responses) before the expansively songful resumption of Tempo I, leading to an *Allegro molto doppio movimento*, *fff*, ending.

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Benjamin Godard's very name is forgotten today, even in France, by the public as well as the younger generation of musicians. His once-famous operas do not figure in the repertoires any longer, and even the tremendously popular *Berceuse* from his opera *Jocelyn* disappeared gradually from the salons, the hotel lounges, the moving picture scores, and the repertory of young pianists and violinists. A similar fate is meted out to his symphonies, his concertos, his chamber music, and his pieces for piano.

And yet, in his lifetime (1849–1895), Godard was a highly successful composer, professor at the Conservatoire from 1887 on, and a favorite of the drawing rooms of the *tourneur* era. Romanticism by this time was already in its overripe age in Germany, the country of its birth,

and if Godard called his concerto for violin “romantique,” it was not because of its romantic style. One reason was simply that the French never liked — and still are averse to — absolute music that has no reference to a concrete thought or emotion expressible by words, and need the presence of an adjective in the title of a piece, added to the bare species-name, such as symphony, concerto, or sonata. Godard composed a *Symphonie-ballet*, a *Symphonie gothique*, a *Symphonie-orientale*, a *Symphonie-légendaire*. The other reason is surely that Godard was a bit self-conscious about his concerto for violin, which was neither classical in form or content, nor did it contain virtuoso fireworks. The fact that the music is rather lightweight did not bother him at all, as he composed only in two veins, light and even lighter. Godard, who was a child prodigy and a brilliant student (although he was refused the Prix de Rome), knew the musical literature quite well. He knew what a sonata was, or a rondo. Yet, his concerto avoids these forms, because he could not invent the material that would be weighty enough for the working out demanded by these forms. Also, he was constitutionally unable to cram the violin part full of dazzling technical difficulties, for that would have marred the light character of his music. His concerto, then, is not classical. If not, why call it romantic? Which of course it is not. It is just drawing-room music for solo violin and orchestra.

Godard composed the *Concerto romantique*, Op. 35, in A minor in 1876. It has four movements.

The first movement, *Allegretto moderato* in 3/4, has only a 16-measure introduction, repeated by the solo violin, thus giving a semblance of the classical double-exposition. The theme, announced fortissimo, consists of three chords followed by a double-stop passage of six eighths, several times repeated in various harmonies, but mostly in strictly eight-measure phrases. Slightly contrasting, somewhat variation-like successions make one almost believe for a moment that he uses chaconne technique, but this is as much a make-believe as the pseudo-double exposition. There is a contrasting section in lieu of development, a hint at recapitulation, and an elaborate coda in A major, featuring a few runs, to justify the title concerto.

The *Adagio ma non troppo* in 2/4 brings a facile melody, neither emotional, nor cerebral, accompanied by the lightest harmonies. There is a *Più mosso* in C major, very slightly different, a few cadenza-like passages, and a coda in D major.

The third movement is the famous *Canzonetta*, featured by violinists as an *encore*—along

with the Drigo *Serenade* or the Drdla *Souvenir* — so many years ago. It is a three-part song.

The finale, *Allegro molto*, is a boisterous movement, with more life and more varied events than the previous three movements. It has a long coda, and some arpeggios in guise of technical effects.

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Like Hubay, Eugène Ysaÿe is better remembered than Ernst, since he toured widely in the beginning of this century not only as a soloist but also as leader of one of the most celebrated string quartets of its time. He was well known too as a conductor, both of his own orchestra in Brussels and of the Cincinnati Symphony during the seasons from 1918 to 1922. He too was a prodigy, entering the Liège Conservatory at the age of seven, studying and playing with his father (who conducted a theater orchestra) before going on to study with Wieniawski and Vieuxtemps. During some years in Paris he became a friend of Franck and Debussy, among other celebrities. Franck's Violin Sonata was a wedding present to Ysaÿe when the latter married Louise Boudeau in 1887; and after Ysaÿe had become a professor at the Brussels Conservatory and formed his own quartet, Debussy dedicated *his* string quartet to that ensemble. Later Ysaÿe toured widely, including a World War I exile in England and several post-war years as a conductor in Cincinnati before settling down in Brussels. He composed prolifically, mostly for violin of course, but also in other media, including an opera — the first to a text in the Walloon dialect — when he was seventy. Particularly notable among his compositions is the series of seven *Poèmes*, mostly for violin and orchestra, of which the first, the *Poème élégiaque*, Op. 12, circa 1894, was the acknowledged direct inspiration of Ernest Chausson's still very popular *Poème* of 1895.

The *Chant d'hiver* is the third of Ysaÿe's *poèmes*, dedicated “à ma Femme,” and published in 1902 in England where he spent a good part of the years from 1901 to 1904. A biography quotes Ysaÿe as saying “I composed this *Poème* at a time when I was tormented by doubts and cast down by depression. Sadness and melancholy, mingled with regret for the happy days of childhood passed on the banks of the Meuse, are expressed in its plaintive melodies.” But this is romanticized hyperbole: the music is nostalgic, to be sure, but never lugubrious, and always fervently poetic.

It is written in a single movement, beginning *Modéré sans lenteur*, 3/8, with the solo part

marked *ben sostenuto*, but changes tempo (and sometimes meter too) frequently throughout its seamlessly woven length: *Plutôt lent*, *Poco più vivo*, *Poco vivo (allargando)*, *Dolce sostenuto*, *Più vivo*, *Allegro*, *Très animé*, *Largamente*, *Tempo I (tranquillo)*, *Lento*, etc. Formal analysis would be pointless and it is scarcely necessary to call attention to the imaginativeness with which even the most technically bravura writing for the soloist — including his ghostly harmonics at the end — are made to serve sheerly expressive, even impressionistic, purposes. Whatever the composer's own depression during the writing of this *poème*, its elegant grace, heartfelt poetic warmth, and perhaps above all its glowing sonic beauty are sure to reverberate in listeners' minds long after the music itself has faded into silence.

Hubay was not the only composer attracted to *Hejre Kati*, a well-known piece of Hungarian folk music (the title translates, more or less, to "Come on, Katy"); Brahms quoted it in the last of his Hungarian Dances, and Franz von Suppé used it in his *Pique Dame* Overture. In his setting, Hubay preserved the traditional form of the *csárdás*: a brooding introductory *lassú* and a whirlwind *friss* full of fireworks. The *csárdás* form as a basis for a concerted work for violin and orchestra, incidentally, has been used by one major composer since Hubay's time (actually *during* his lifetime): the two rhapsodies for violin and orchestra composed by Béla Bartók in 1928 are both in the form of a *csárdás*, each in two sections marked *Lassú* and *Friss*.

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Mention Franz Lehar (1870–1948) and *The Merry Widow* comes to mind. Rightly so, for this perennially fresh work of 1905 retains its place as a masterpiece of operetta, a form that enjoyed a brilliant revival as an international form of entertainment during the first half of the twentieth century. Lehar was at the center of this revival and may be regarded as the leading composer of the genre. *The Merry Widow* was followed by a number of successes, some still part of the active repertory in Austrian and German theaters, among them *The Land of Smiles*, *The Count of Luxembourg*, *Frasquita*, and *Giuditta* (originally written for the Vienna State Opera). Lehar combined a natural talent for melody and infectious rhythms with a firm command of compositional technique. And though the operettas abound in sentiment, they avoid sentimentality and at their best display wit and irony in addition to considerable charm.

Besides operettas, which include a good deal of dance music, mostly in the form of waltzes, Lehar produced some orchestral music and songs. *The Hungarian Fantasy*, Op. 45 was originally

written for violin and small orchestra and later transcribed for violin and piano, a medium ideally suited for the music's transparent texture and simple structure, a series of regular paragraphs in contrasting tempos, typical of Hungarian gipsy music: Introduction (piano); *Lento*; *Allegretto*; *Presto*; *Moderato*; *Presto*. D minor prevails up to the *Moderato*, which is in A major; the final section is in D major. The *Hungarian Fantasy* was published by Glocken Verlag, a Viennese firm that Lehar founded in 1935 primarily to secure the rights to his own operettas. The score of the *Fantasy* lists these on the back page: conspicuously absent is *The Merry Widow*, which the original publisher, Doblinger, kept for itself, thus assuring that the widow's millions remained at home.

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Henryk Wieniawski (1835–1880) was a striking exemplar of the phenomenon known as the "virtuoso-composer" — that is, a celebrated performer who composed music almost exclusively for his own instrument and his own use. (He was also a sought-after teacher, and numbered the aforementioned Auer among his pupils.) The second of his two concertos, with its radiant slow movement (*Romanze*), is one of the most beloved works of its kind, and many of his shorter pieces are in the repertory of every violinist. Wieniawski composed two *polonaises de concert*; the one in D major, recorded here, was the first, written at the end of the 1850s and dedicated to the composer's compatriot Carl Lipinski (1790–1861), himself a virtuoso-composer who studied with Paganini, performed with Liszt, and received the dedication of Schumann's *Carnaval*. Lipinski had also composed such pieces, but must have been dazzled by this gift from his young colleague.

Notes by R.D. Darrell, D. Nimetz and Richard Freed