

NAXOS

**Joseph
JOACHIM**

**Violin Concerto
in the Hungarian
Style, Op. 11**

**Violin Concerto in
G minor, Op. 3**

**Suyoen Kim, Violin
Staatskapelle Weimar
Michael Halász**



Joseph Joachim (1831–1907)

Violin Concerto in G minor in one movement, Op. 3

Violin Concerto in D minor in the Hungarian Style, Op. 11

The violinist Joseph Joachim has a secure place in the history of violin-playing and in the wider history of music because of his close association with Brahms and his clear influence on the latter's writing for the violin and on his techniques of orchestration.

Joachim was born in 1831 at Kitsee, near Pressburg (Bratislava), part of the Esterházy domain, into a German-speaking family, the seventh of eight children of Julius and Fanny Joachim, and with the encouragement of his parents, not unusual in a Jewish family, made an early start on his musical studies. In 1833 the family moved to Pest, where Joachim had his first violin lessons with the leader of the Pest Opera Orchestra, the Polish violinist Stanisław Serwaczyński, with whom he made his first public concert appearance in 1839, performing a double violin concerto by the Mannheim violinist Johann Friedrich Eck. In the same year a cousin took him to Vienna to take lessons with Miska Hauser and then to the older Georg Hellmesberger, who refused to take him as a pupil. He was accepted, however, by Joseph Böhm, originally from Pest and a former pupil in Paris of Pierre Rode, an heir to the violin-playing tradition of Viotti. In Vienna he started playing quartets with the Hellmesberger children in what was known as the *Wunderkinderquartett*. In musical evenings at Böhm's he grew to know something of quartet literature, not least the later quartets of Beethoven, a composer for whom Böhm had played. His technical training now complete, in 1843, at the age of twelve, he was taken by his cousin to Leipzig to meet Mendelssohn, with whom he played chamber music and in August that year appeared in a Leipzig Gewandhaus concert, with Pauline Viardot-García and Clara Schumann, playing an *Adagio and Rondo* by Charles-Auguste de Bériot. The following year Mendelssohn took him to London, where he played Beethoven's *Violin Concerto*, a work then considered barely playable which became a constant element in his concert repertoire.

Mendelssohn's sudden death in 1847 affected Joachim deeply. In 1850 he moved to Weimar with the intention of

studying with Liszt, who advised him to compose. In Weimar he led the court orchestra from 1850 until 1852 and played in chamber music evenings. It was here that he wrote his *Violin Concerto in G minor, Op. 3*, dedicated to Liszt. In 1853 he was appointed concert-master to the court in Hanover, a position he held until 1868, two years after the annexation of Hanover by Prussia. It was in Hanover that, through his Hungarian contemporary, the violinist Ede Reményi, he first met Brahms. This period of his life allowed him the formation of a new quartet, the opportunity to give concerts abroad, and the time to compose a large number of works, including four concert overtures and two violin concertos, in his search for what has been described as a compromise between the programmatic music of Liszt and the poetic music of Schumann, with whom he developed a close friendship before the latter's final illness. He was baptized as a Lutheran in 1854, as Mendelssohn had been. The association with Schumann and his wife led to a gradual break with Liszt and the neo-German school he represented, a breach made definitive in a letter to Liszt in 1857 in which, while thanking him for his support, he expressed his repugnance towards Liszt's music, feelings that were given public expression in the open attack on Liszt and Wagner leaked to the *Berliner Musik-Zeitung Echo* in 1860, a document to which Brahms and Joachim both put their names. Wagner's published antisemitic reply ensured a hardening of attitudes on both sides. The breach between Joachim and Liszt lasted for some 25 years, but they did meet again in Budapest in 1880 and at the unveiling of the Bach memorial in Eisenach in 1884. According to the English press, at least, there was a full reconciliation between the two in London in 1886 on the occasion of a celebration in Liszt's honour.

In 1863 Joachim married the singer Amalie Schneeweiss, who had appeared as a soloist at the Royal Opera in Hanover but left the stage after her marriage. In 1868 the couple moved to Berlin, where Joachim shortly afterwards established a School of Instrumental Music for the Royal

Academy of Arts, from 1872 the Royal Musikhochschule, while his wife, in the intervals between bearing children, continued a concert career. In Berlin Joachim exercised a strong musical influence with his quartet evenings, collaborating also in the North Rhine Music Festival, the Bonn Beethoven Festival and Schumann memorial celebrations, among other activities. At the Hochschule he established an orchestra and was able to mount a series of performances of Handel oratorios. At the same time he continued his association with England, which he visited annually, appearing there as a soloist or in quartet performances. He enjoyed enormous success as a teacher and as a performer, but over the course of some forty years the Hochschule and its circle became a seeming bastion of antagonism to the school of Liszt and Wagner, identified with a certain conservatism. In the 1880s problems arose in Joachim's relationship with his wife, from whom he sought a divorce. It was on this occasion that Brahms, with the lack of tact for which he was well known, sided with Amalie Joachim against her husband, a close friend and collaborator for so many years. The resulting breach in Joachim's friendship with Brahms lasted a year, to be healed, partially at least, by the latter's composition of his *Double Concerto for Violin and Cello*.

Joachim died in Berlin in 1907. While his musical conservatism had isolated him from some contemporaries, his influence as a violin teacher had been very great, perpetuated not least by his many editions of violin literature and by his pupils. In childhood he had had lessons with Joseph Böhm, a pupil of Pierre Rode, heir to Viotti. In Leipzig he had had lessons from Ferdinand David, himself a pupil of Spohr. Among the many violinists who studied with him were Leopold Auer, Willy Burmester, Jenő Hubay and Tchaikovsky's young friend Yosif Kotek. He had been of notable assistance to his friend Brahms in the violin-writing for the latter's *Violin Concerto* and in other compositions. His wider influence is reflected in his performance repertoire, his advocacy of Brahms and promotion of string quartet repertoire. As a composer his works have held no secure part in current concert programmes, except, of course, for the cadenzas he provided for the concertos of Beethoven and Brahms.

The *Concerto in one movement in G minor, Op. 3*, dates from about 1851 and was dedicated to Liszt. It was published in Leipzig in 1854 and seems to breathe all the exuberance of a young virtuoso. The single movement is in broadly classical form. A short orchestral introduction leads to a cadenza for the soloist, after which the orchestra states the principal theme. The soloist's version of the theme involves multiple stopping and virtuoso passage-work leads to a second theme, announced by the orchestra and developed by the soloist. The two main themes eventually return and there is an elaborate cadenza for the soloist. It seems that the major key of the second theme may triumph, but the concerto ends, in fact, with a reference to the G minor first theme.

Joachim wrote his *Violin Concerto in D minor in the Hungarian Style, Op. 11*, in 1857. It was published in Leipzig in 1861, the year in which Joachim made his first return to Vienna after his earlier studies there, and was included in the five concerts he gave at the Musikvereinsaal, with a repertoire that included Beethoven's *Violin Concerto* and the *Romances*, his version of Tartini's *Devil's Trill Sonata*, Schumann's *Fantasy, Op. 131*, and works by Bach and by Spohr. The critic Eduard Hanslick recorded Joachim as having been for some ten years the greatest living violinist. His review of the *Concerto in the Hungarian Style* was more guarded, describing it as too expansive, complicated and striking in its virtuosity to be evaluated at a first hearing.

The first movement starts with a conventional orchestral exposition and a principal theme of Hungarian inflection. To this a second theme offers a contrast. The entry of the soloist leads to technical display before the first theme is stated again, to be elaborated before the soloist introduces a version of the second theme. The development and recapitulation both call for virtuosity, further displayed in the cadenza, partly accompanied. The second movement is a G major *Romanze*, its lyrical first theme contrasted with a more aggressive secondary theme. The movement ends with reminiscences of the first theme, with its characteristically Hungarian ending. The *Finale alla zingara* is an opportunity for assumed gypsy abandon, with themes suited to the prevailing mood and the greatest demands on the technique and stamina of the soloist.

Keith Anderson



Suyoen Kim

The Korean violinist Suyoen Kim was born in the German city of Münster in 1987. She began playing the violin when she was five years old and at the age of nine enrolled as an external student at the Detmold Musikhochschule, studying with Helge Slaatto, the youngest such student ever accepted at a German conservatory. From 2004 to 2008 she was a full student of Helge Slaatto at the Münster Musikhochschule and is now a postgraduate student with Anna Chumachenko at the Munich Musikhochschule. At the age of sixteen she was already receiving accolades from important sources, appearing in concerts and recordings as a soloist with major orchestras throughout Europe and in Korea. Suyoen Kim is a laureate of the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels (2009), and among other awards won first prize in the Hannover International Violin Competition (2006), the Augsburg Leopold Mozart Competition (2003), and the Copenhagen Berlingske Tidende Youth Competition (1999, 2000), with *Jugend musiziert* in Germany (2001). In 2005 she obtained the Young Artist Award of the State of Northrhine-Westphalia. She has

benefited from a number of scholarships in Germany and plays a violin made by Camillus Camilli (Mantua, 1742) which was given to her by Deutscher Musikinstrumentenfonds of the Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben.



Michael Halász

Michael Halász's first engagement as a conductor was at the Munich Gärtnerplatztheater where, between 1972 and 1975, he directed all operetta productions. In 1975 he moved to Frankfurt to work as principal *Kapellmeister* with Christoph von Dohnányi and here he conducted the most important works of the operatic repertoire. Many engagements as a guest conductor followed and in 1977 Dohnányi engaged him as principal *Kapellmeister* at the Staatsoper in Hamburg. From 1978 to 1991 he was General Musical Director of the Hagen Opera House and in 1991 he took up the post of Resident Conductor at the Vienna State Opera. For Naxos Michael Halász has recorded works by Tchaikovsky (ballets), Wagner (operatic excerpts), symphonies by Beethoven, Schubert and Mahler, Rossini's overtures and two volumes of Liszt's symphonic poems, the latter described by the *Penguin Guide* as "one of the most successful collections of Liszt's symphonic poems to have emerged in recent years".

Beyond the standard and purely orchestral repertoire he has recorded Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* and *Orfeo*, Mozart's *Mass in C minor* and his *Kyrie in D minor*, Richard Strauss's *Bourgeois Gentleman*, Beethoven's *Creatures of Prometheus*, cello

concertos by Dvořák, Elgar, Dohnányi and Lalo, and Rubinstein's *Violin Concerto*. For Marco Polo Michael Halász has recorded Rubinstein's ballet music and *Don Quixote*, Goldmark's *Symphony No. 2*, Miaszkovsky's *Symphonies Nos. 7 and 10*, Schmidt's *Symphony No. 1* and a pioneering recording of Schreker's opera *Der ferne Klang* (now available on Naxos 8.660074-75). Building on his growing prowess in the opera house, Halász has directed recordings of *Fidelio* (8.660070-71), *Don Giovanni* (8.660080-82) and *Die Zauberflöte* (8.660030-31), for the last of these winning particular critical praise. His most recent complete opera recording was of *Le nozze di Figaro* (8.660102-04).

Staatskapelle Weimar

Founded in 1491, the Staatskapelle Weimar is one of the oldest orchestras in the world, its reputation inextricably linked to some of the greatest works and musicians of all time. Franz Liszt, court music director in the mid-nineteenth century, helped the orchestra gain international recognition with premières that included Wagner's *Lohengrin* in 1850. As Weimar's second music director, Richard Strauss conducted first performances of *Guntram* and Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*. The orchestra was also the first to perform Strauss's *Don Juan*, *Macbeth* and *Death and Transfiguration*. After World War II Hermann Abendroth did much to restore the orchestra's former status and quality, ultimately establishing it as one of Germany's leading orchestras. The Staatskapelle Weimar cultivates its historic tradition today, while exploring innovative techniques and wider repertoire, as reflected in its many recordings. The orchestra regularly collaborates with world-renowned soloists and conductors, and, in addition to international concert-tours, continues to cultivate the great operatic tradition in Weimar, especially of the late Romantic period. For more information, visit: www.nationaltheater-weimar.de



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Playing Time
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A colleague of Mendelssohn, the Schumanns and Brahms, the virtuoso violinist Joseph Joachim was himself a composer of note. His exuberant single-movement *Opus 3 Violin Concerto* from around 1851 was dedicated to Liszt, from whom he subsequently distanced himself. It is a tour de force by a highly gifted twenty year old. The *Opus 11 Violin Concerto* followed six years later, its Classical three movements frequently coloured by Hungarian inflections, most strikingly in the 'gypsy finale' which calls for astonishing technical control, immense stamina and fiery abandon from the soloist. Suyoen Kim is the Winner of the 2006 Hannover International Violin Competition.

Joseph
JOACHIM
(1831–1907)

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| 1 | Violin Concerto in G minor in one movement, Op. 3
Allegro – Presto assai | 20:07 |
| | Violin Concerto in D minor in the Hungarian Style, Op. 11 | 45:37 |
| 2 | Allegro un poco maestoso | 26:20 |
| 3 | Romanze: Andante – Allegretto | 7:29 |
| 4 | Finale alla zingara: Allegro con spirito | 11:43 |



Suyoen Kim, Violin
Staatskapelle Weimar
Michael Halász



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