

Géza Anda's style was noteworthy for its transparency of texture and its singing qualities, which led Furtwängler to dub him a "troubadour" of the piano. His flawless technique allowed him to invest his performances with considerable individuality: his readings of Schumann, for instance, were breathtakingly multidimensional, full of asides and highly appropriate introspective commentary conveyed from within Schumann's notes. He was especially influenced by his artistic partnership with the great Romanian pianist Clara Haskil, with whom he played two-piano repertoire from 1953 to 1958. Her moral commitment to conveying music's essence deepened Anda's own musical insight; his subsequent performances reflected a new harnessing of Anda's strong musical personality to the service of the music's meaning.

Austrian violinist and sometime conductor Wolfgang Schneiderhan (born 1915) is a highly versatile artist, just as much at home in the music of Hans Werner Henze as he is in Beethoven, Mozart, and Schubert, even if he is best known for his playing of the last-named group of composers. Never a major European star, he was nevertheless active in every aspect of Austria's music scene and was widely admired for the depth of his interpretive abilities. He was married for 40 years to the legendary German soprano Irmgard Seefried.

Pierre Fournier made his first U.S. tour in 1948. His chamber music partner Artur Schnabel spread the word among cellists, other musicians, and critics that they were to be visited by a great new cellist. The New York and Boston critics were ecstatic. He had to give up his Conservatoire post because of his expanding concert career; he appeared in Moscow for the first time in 1959. Commentator Lev Grinberg wrote that he was notable for a romantic interpretation; clarity of form; vivid phrasing; and clean, broad bowing all "aimed at revealing the content."

He had a broad repertoire, including Bach, Boccherini, the Romantics, Debussy, Hindemith, and Prokofiev. Composers Martinu, Martinon, Martin, Roussel, and Poulenc all wrote works for him. He had a standing Friday night date to privately play chamber music with Alfred Cortot, the eminent French pianist, at which they might be visited by musicians like Jacques Thibaud. In 1953, he became a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor and was promoted to officer in 1963.

Beethoven Triple Concerto

Géza Anda - Wolfgang Schneiderhan - Pierre Fournier

Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin

Ferenc Fricsay conductor



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Ferenc Fricsay's approach to conducting was influenced heavily by Toscanini, whose relationship with the NBC Symphony he used as a model for his own work with the Berlin Radio Symphony. He emphasized strict tempos and precise playing, with a close adherence to the score. As an operatic conductor, however, he was not afraid to challenge customs and conventions, both in his conception of a work and his way of realizing performances of striking vitality.

Fricsay began developing serious health problems in the 1950s. The vivaciousness of his earlier performances was replaced by a more measured, reflective approach to music as his physical condition deteriorated, and by the end of the 1950s, when he would normally have been expected to be in his prime as a conductor and recording artist, his strength was beginning to fail him. When he died, Fricsay left behind a small, precious body of recordings.

Beethoven's "Triple" Concerto is often treated as the less brilliant sibling of the more imposing works composed around the same time: *Fidelio*, the Fourth Piano Concerto, the Violin Concerto, and the Fourth Symphony. It is important to note that this work was written with an amateur pianist in mind: the relatively simple piano part was designed for Beethoven's patron, the Archduke Rudolf; nevertheless, professional musicians are required for the brutal cello part and the less difficult -- but still quite challenging -- violin part. The work was not premiered until 1808, failed to go over well, and has received limited attention ever since. The themes do tend to wander, their development is rather haphazard, and there are no showy cadenzas; in the work's favor, the subtle effects for the soloists and their imaginative interplay with the orchestra must be noted. The concerto follows all the expected patterns. The first movement, *Allegro*, is in sonata form, with the principal themes laid out by the orchestra

before the soloists put in an appearance. The first theme is optimistic, elegant, mildly striving, but completely unpretentious: almost a German walking tune. The two string soloists come in with their version of the first theme, which is soon taken up by the piano with the strings playing a subsidiary role. The soloists develop this material sometimes individually, sometimes the strings alternating with the piano, and sometimes in conjunction with various components of the orchestra. In general, though, only one soloist takes the spotlight at a time, if only for a few bars. This polite turn-taking stretches the movement beyond the point its thematic material merits, the inventive dialogue among the instruments almost compensating for the thin content. The second movement, *Largo*, is far more compact. Written in A flat major, this movement is highly cantabile and poetic, with the cello first singing out the theme at some length. The piano offers some atmospheric support, while the two string soloists handle most of the lingering, effusive lyricism. Clouds pass over during a minor mode episode imposed by the orchestra near the end, but the soloists modulate back to the major for a seamless transition into the finale, a *Rondo alla Polacca*. The "Polish" designation has to do with the rhythm rather than any appropriations of folk tunes. The movement begins sweetly enough, though with some tough turns for the string players. Spirits rise through the remainder of the rondo, with a light but distinctly pulsing rhythm (there is nevertheless an obvious polonaise right in the middle of it all) and several instances of rapid passagework for the string soloists. The trio rushes through a penultimate breakneck episode, but slows down for its last, dance-like section while the orchestra keeps trying to cut in with a big, affirmative conclusion.

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1. Allegro 18:03

2. Largo — Attacca 5:00

3. Rondo Alla Polacca 13:30

Total Time: 36:33

Engineer – Günter Hermanns, Werner Wolf

Producer – Otto Gerdes

Recorded by DGG 1960 in Berlin, Jesus Christus-Kirche



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