

Henryk Szeryng, (born Sept. 22, 1918, Zelazowa Wola, near Warsaw [Poland]—died March 3, 1988, Kassel, W.Ger.), Polish-born Mexican violinist noted for his performances of the major repertory.

Szeryng studied with Carl Flesch in Berlin and with Jacques Thibaud in Paris. He made his debut in 1933, and from 1933 to 1939 he was a composition student of Nadia Boulanger in Paris. During World War II he was on the staff of the Polish government-in-exile. Fluent in seven languages, he worked as a translator and traveled to Mexico to find homes for refugees. He gave more than 300 concerts for Allied troops in Europe, Asia, Africa, and North and South America. He became a professor at the University of Mexico in 1943 and a Mexican citizen in 1946.

Encouraged by Artur Rubinstein, he resumed his concert career in 1954 and soon gained recognition for his technical command and stylistic elegance. He made numerous recordings, including all of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's works for violin and orchestra and J.S. Bach's solo sonatas and partitas. He became a special music adviser to UNESCO in 1970 and served as a cultural ambassador for Mexico.

BRAHMS

VIOLIN - CONCERTO

Henryk Szeryng

London Symphony Orchestra
Pierre Monteux



HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS

Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 77, three-movement concerto for violin and orchestra by Johannes Brahms that showcased the virtuosic talents of a longtime friend, the Hungarian violinist Joseph Joachim. Both men participated in its premiere (Brahms as conductor) in Leipzig on January 1, 1879. The work, which is known for its lyrical melodies and rich orchestration, melded the sense of grandeur present in Beethoven's Violin Concerto (which Joachim particularly loved) and the flavour of the Hungarian folk rhythms of Joachim's native land. The Brahms violin concerto has long been a favourite of virtuoso violinists.

Brahms began to write this work in the summer of 1878, while vacationing in the Austrian village of Pörschach. Knowing Joachim's abilities as well as he did—Joachim and Brahms had performed together for decades—Brahms nevertheless sent him the first movement solo part, instructing him,

You should correct it, not sparing the quality of the compo-

sition.... I shall be satisfied if you will mark those parts which are difficult, awkward, or impossible to play.

The violinist complied, starting a lengthy correspondence concerning the concerto. Their discussion continued until the concerto's premiere. Some listeners were skeptical of the new piece, which seemed as if it would prove to be beyond the abilities of most violinists. One observer, conductor and pianist Hans von Bülow, asserted that it was a concerto not for but "against the violin," and Brahms and Joachim continued to revise the work until its publication six months later. One feature of the work that remained was a passage in the second movement in which the violin soloist steps out of the spotlight to allow for an extended oboe solo. The 19th-century virtuoso violinist Pablo de Sarasate so objected to this that he refused to play the piece. Joachim, however, recognized that the oboe passage provided a deft contrast with the violin itself and did not protest.

BRAHMS

VIOLIN CONCERTO

Henryk Szeryng, violin

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1. Allegro Non Troppo 22:04

2. Adagio 9:30

3. Allegro Giocoso 8:09

Total Time: 39:43

Recorded by RCA June 1958 Walthamstow Assembly Hall

Producer: James Walker Engineer: Kenneth Wilkinson

Transferred from a 15ips 2-track tape



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