

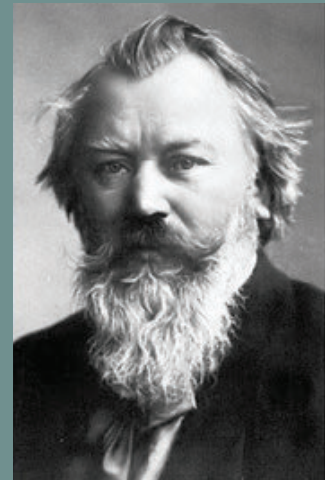
highest possible standards of excellence throughout an exhausting touring schedule (he returned to the U.S. six times in the 1960s), and he began a small but successful sideline career as an orchestral conductor. His death came suddenly in Amsterdam in 1974, during a cycle of Brahms concerts in which he both played and conducted. Oistrakh's unexpected death left a void in the Soviet musical world which was never really filled.

Throughout his career David Oistrakh was known for his honest, warm personality; he developed close friendships with many of the leading musicians of the day. His violin technique was virtually flawless, though he never allowed purely physical matters to dominate his musical performances. He always demanded of himself (and his students) that musical proficiency, intelligence, and emotion be in balance, regardless of the particular style. Oistrakh felt that a violinist's essence was communicated through clever and subtle use of the bow, and not through overly expressive use of vibrato. To this end he developed a remarkably relaxed, flexible right arm technique, capable of producing the most delicate expressive nuances, but equally capable of generating great volume and projection.

As a teacher, David Oistrakh maintained that a teacher should do no more than necessary to help guide the student toward his or her own solutions to technical and interpretive difficulties. He rarely played during lessons, fearing that he might distract the student from developing a more individual approach, and even encouraged his students to challenge his interpretations. Perhaps the best evidence of the Oistrakh's gift for teaching is that he felt that he gained as much from the teaching experience as his students did.

# Brahms

**Violin Concerto In D Major, Op. 77**



**David Oistrakh**  
**French National Radio Orchestra**  
**Otto Klemperer**

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,

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.

David Oistrakh is considered the premiere violinist of mid-20th century

Soviet Union. His recorded legacy includes nearly the entire standard violin repertory up to and including Prokofiev and Bartók. Oistrakh's violin studies began in 1913 with famed teacher Pyotr Stolyarsky. Later he officially joined Stolyarsky's class at the Odessa Conservatory, graduating in 1926 by playing Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto. Performances of the Glazunov concerto in Odessa and Kiev in 1927, and a 1928 debut in Leningrad (Tchaikovsky concerto), gave Oistrakh the confidence to move to Moscow. He made his premiere there in early 1929, but the event went largely unnoticed. In 1934, however, after several years of patiently refining his craft, Oistrakh was invited to join the Moscow Conservatory, eventually rising to the rank of full professor in 1939.

Meanwhile, Oistrakh was gaining success on the competition circuit, winning the 1930 All-Ukrainian contest, and the All-Soviet competition three years later. In 1935 he took second prize at the Wieniawski competition. In 1937 the Soviet government sent the now veteran violinist to Brussels to compete in the International Ysaÿe Competition, where he took home first prize.

With his victory in Brussels, Soviet composers began to take notice of their young compatriot, enabling Oistrakh to work closely with Myaskovsky and Khachaturian on their concertos in 1939 and 1940, respectively. In addition, his close friendship with Shostakovich led the composer to write two concertos for the instrument (the first of which Oistrakh played at his, and its, triumphant American premiere in 1955). During the 1940s Oistrakh's active performing schedule took him across the Soviet Union but his international career had to wait until the 1950s, when the political climate had cooled enough for Soviet artists to be welcomed in the capitals of the West.

The remaining decades of Oistrakh's life were devoted to maintaining the

# Brahms

**Violin Concerto In D Major, Op. 77**

**David Oistrakh, violin**

**Otto Klemperer - French National Radio Orchestra**

**1. Allegro Non Troppo 22:35**

**2. Adagio 9:41**

**3. Allegro Giocoso 8:32**

**Total Time: 40:48**

Released by Columbia Records 1959



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