

Robert SCHUMANN
Cello Concerto, Op. 129

Max BRUCH
Kol Nidrei

Henri CASADESUS
(formerly attrib. J.C. Bach)
Cello Concerto in C minor

Joseph Schuster, Cello
Los Angeles Festival Orchestra
Franz Waxman

1953 Studio Recordings



Max Bruch (1838-1920): Kol Nidrei

Henri Casadesus (1879-1947): Cello Concerto in C minor (formerly attr. J.C. Bach)

Robert Schumann (1810-1856): Cello Concerto in A minor, Op. 129

Robert Schumann must seem in many ways typical of the age in which he lived, combining a number of the principal characteristics of Romanticism in his music and in his life. Born in Zwickau in 1810, the son of a bookseller, publisher and writer, he showed an early interest in literature, and was to make a name for himself in later years as a writer and editor of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, a journal launched in 1834.

After a period at university, to satisfy the ambitions of his widowed mother, while still showing the wide interests of a dilettante, Schumann turned more fully to music under the tuition of Friedrich Wieck, a famous teacher whose energies had been largely directed towards the training of his daughter Clara, a pianist of prodigious early talent. The romance that led in 1840 to their marriage, in spite of the bitter opposition of Wieck, was followed by a period in which Clara's career as a pianist had, in some way, to be reconciled with her husband's ambitions and the demands of a growing family. A weakness in the fingers had caused Schumann to give up the idea of becoming a virtuoso pianist, but he drew attention as a writer on musical matters and, increasingly, as a composer. His final position in Düsseldorf as director of music was not successful, however, and culminated in an attempt at suicide, insanity and death in 1856.

Schumann wrote his *Cello Concerto* in 1850, describing it in his own list of compositions as a *Konzertstück*. It came, therefore, during the first period of his appointment in Düsseldorf. at the time of composition of his *Third Symphony*, the *Rhenish*. He already had some knowledge of the cello, having played it in the 1830s, when he was forced to turn his attention away from the piano, at least as a professional performer. The lower register of the cello poses certain problems to composers, since it may all too easily be obscured by the orchestra. This is avoided by Schumann's scoring, which, nevertheless, has been criticized, leading some to re-orchestrate the concerto in ways that are often interesting, if idiosyncratic.

Woodwind chords, with pizzicato strings, open the concerto, the soloist entering after a brief accompanying figure in the violins. The strongly romantic first theme is proclaimed by the cello, which continues in prominence until

the first orchestral tutti, answered by a further solo. The rhapsodic material is developed, the solo theme re-appearing in F sharp minor before the recapitulation in the original key, with the secondary theme now in the tonic major. There is an expressive F major slow movement and brief reminiscences of the principal themes of both movements before the launching of the finale, with arpeggios that form part of the cello theme, the basis of the movement, which leads to an accompanied cadenza and an emphatic conclusion.

Born in Cologne in 1838, Max Bruch enjoyed a career as a conductor that took him as far afield as Liverpool and as a composer of choral music that enjoyed contemporary popularity. He is chiefly remembered in modern international repertoire for his *G minor Violin Concerto*, which is widely known, and by his *Scottish Fantasia*, also for solo violin and orchestra. *Kol Nidrei* is probably the best known of the shorter instrumental pieces Bruch wrote. It is an *Adagio* on Hebrew themes, published in 1881 in Berlin, where ten years later the composer was appointed professor at the Academy, with responsibility for the composition master-class. The title, which means "All the vows", is taken from a prayer used on the Day of Atonement.

The *Concerto* formerly attributed to J.C. Bach turns out to have been entirely the work of the viola-player Henri Casadesus, one of a number of such compositions or 'reconstructions'. Joseph Schuster introduced the work to America in 1950 and programmed it in his concerts.

Keith Anderson

Joseph Schuster (1903-1969)

Joseph Schuster was a cello virtuoso of the first order, and won the highest plaudits of critics all over the world. Born in Istanbul, he studied in St Petersburg and Berlin Conservatories, and for five years was first cellist of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. He made his American debut in 1934, and shortly thereafter became the first cellist of the New York Philharmonic, a position he held for eight years. In 1943 he began giving recitals and appearing as soloist with orchestras, and his very successful tours took him throughout South America, Europe, Asia and to every corner of the United States. He was also featured in important musical presentations on radio and television.

Los Angeles Festival Orchestra (1947-1966)

The Los Angeles Music Festival was first organized for the purpose of presenting each year a Festival of Music, the programmes of which introduced many important works of music hitherto unknown not only in Southern California but sometimes even to America and the world. They included 70 world premières. From their inception, the Orchestra and Festival were under the leadership of Franz Waxman. The musicians in the Festival Orchestra were hand-picked by Franz Waxman from colleagues he had worked with since 1935. On other recordings from the 1950s and 1960s the orchestra was known as the Columbia Symphony Orchestra in performances conducted by Bruno Walter and Igor Stravinsky. For further information go to <http://www.franzwaxman.com/lamf/index.html>

Franz Waxman (1906-1967)

Franz Waxman's name is best known to the American public for his scores written for such pictures as *Rebecca*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *A Place in the Sun* and *Taras Bulba*, but his own interest and ability in the music did not end there. His own formal musical education was received in Berlin, and he conducted standard programmes of symphonic music in America, Europe, Israel and Russia. He conducted recordings for outstanding soloists, such as Jascha Heifetz (including his own *Carmen Fantaisie*, his most performed concert piece) and Isaac Stern. A study of the programmes of the Los Angeles Music Festival reveals a musical mind of vigour and enterprising foresight.

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ADD MONO

Franz Waxman Conducts • 3



Playing
Time
51:18

Robert Schumann • Max Bruch Henri Casadesus

Max BRUCH (1838-1920):

1 Kol Nidrei 11:26

Henri CASADESUS (1879-1947)

(formerly attr. J.C. Bach):

Cello Concerto in C minor 14:54

2 Allegro molto ma maestoso 3:53

3 Adagio molto espressivo 6:42

4 Allegro molto energico 4:19

Robert SCHUMANN (1810-1856):

Cello Concerto in A minor, Op. 129 24:57

5 Nicht zu schnell – Langsam – Sehr lebhaft

Joseph Schuster, Cello

Los Angeles Festival Orchestra

Franz Waxman

Recorded in Los Angeles, California, 11th June 1953

Of Russian descent, cellist Joseph Schuster was born in Istanbul in 1903. A student of Hugo Becker, Schuster was successively first cellist of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic-Symphony. In 1947 he moved to the West Coast for a solo career that saw worldwide travel and performances with a series of great conductors. Important recordings duly followed. With Franz Waxman, a contemporary who had also studied in Berlin, and who was one of Hollywood's leading film composers, Schuster recorded Schumann's *Concerto*, Henri Casadesus' ingenious pastiche in the style of J.C. Bach, and Bruch's memorable *Kol Nidrei*, all of which illustrate his expressive musicianship.

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The photograph of Joseph Schuster is reproduced by courtesy of his son John Schuster

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