

## Of Related Interest on Music & Arts:

CD-1083(t) Adolph Busch and Friends at the 1949 Strasburg Festival. BRAHMS: *Concerto for Violin and Cello in a minor, Op.102*. A. & H. Busch, French National Radio Orchestra, P. Kletzki, cond. (21 June 1949); BRAHMS: *Sextet Nr. 1 for 2 vn, 2 va, 2 vc. In Bb Major Op.18* with A. Busch, Vn. I, B. Straumann, Vn. II, H. Gottesmann, Va. I, H. Busch, Vc. I, A. Bertschmann, Va. II, A. Wenzinger, Vc. II (13 June 1949). MENDELSSOHN: *Capriccio from Andante, Scherzo, Capriccio und Fugue (Quartet) op. 81 no. 3*, Busch Quartet (A. Busch, Vn. I, B. Straumann, Vn II, H. Gottesmann, Va, H. Busch, Vc) (11 June 1949). [ADD].

CD-1116(t) Erica Morini in Concert: TCHAIKOVSKY: *Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35*, National Radio Orchestra, Horenstein, Paris, 12/19/57. BRAHMS: *Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 77*, Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, Szell, Carnegie Hall, 12/14/52. Previously unreleased broadcast transcriptions.

CD-1118(t) Zino Francescatti In Performance: TCHAIKOVSKY: *Violin Concerto in D Major Op 35* Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, Arthur Rodzinski (24.10.1943) BRUCH: *Violin Concerto No. 1 in G Minor Op 26*, NBC Symphony Orchestra, Frank Black (29.4.1945) SAINT SAENS: *Violin Concerto No. 3 in B Minor Op 61*, ORTF, Charles Munch (1951 Strasbourg Festival) [AAD].

CD-1160(t) The Art of Camilla Wicks. BEETHOVEN: *Violin Concerto in D, Op. 61*, Philharmonic-Symphony Orch., Bruno Walter (2/15/53); BLOCH: *Baal Shem from "3 pictures of Hassidic life,"* Standard S.O. (Los Angeles), John Barnett (5/28/50); SIBELIUS: *Concerto For Violin & Orchestra In D minor, Op 47: Allegro, Ma Non Tanto*, Standard S.O. (L.A.), John Barnett (5/28/50); TCHAIKOVSKY: *Violin Concerto in D*, Standard S.O. (San Francisco), Arthur Fiedler (7/16/50). Sound restoration: Aaron Z. Snyder. Liner notes by Nathanael Vallois. [AAD]

CD-1164(2) The World of Jenő Hubay. HUBAY: *Scènes de la Csárda. #8 Op. 60 "Azt mondják."* [So they say . . .]; *no.3 Op. 18 "Maros vize"* [The river Maros]; *#2 Op. 13, Kis furulyám.* [My little pipe]; *#12 Op. 83 "Piczi tubiczám"* [My little turtle dove]; *#7 Op. 41 "Kossuth-nóta"* [Kossuth,s song]; *#5 Op. 33 "Hullámzó Balaton"* [The waves of Lake Balaton]; *#14 Op. 117 "Sur des thèmes de Lavotta"* [On themes of Lavotta]; *#4 Op. 32 "Hejre Kati"* [Hey Kati]. Charles Castleman, violin, with Eastman Chamber Orchestra, cond. Mendi Rodan [DDD]. **With free bonus CD: Hubay and his Pupils play Hubay.** Rare historical recordings newly restored: *Intermezzo from The Violin Maker of Cremona.* Jenő Hubay; Franz von Vecsey; Harry Solloway; *Poem Hongroise, Op. 27 No. 6.* Jelly D.Arányi; *Zephyr, Op. 30 No. 5.* Ibolyka Zilzer; Joseph Szigeti; *Scene de la Csárda No. 5, Op. 33, "Hullámzó Balaton."* Ibolyka Zilzer; *Mazurka in a, Op. 45 No. 1.* Ibolyka Gyárfás; *Scene de la Csárda No. 8, Op. 60, "Azt mondják."* Mary Zentay; *Scene de la Csárda No. 12.* Duci de Kerekjártó; *Scene de la Csárda No. 2.* Duci de Kerekjártó; Emil Telmányi; *Les Fileuses.* Emil Telmányi; *Scene de la Csárda No. 4, "Hejre Kati!"* Emil Telmányi and *Scene de la Csárda No. 3: Maros Vize.* Joseph Szigeti. [AAD] A co-production with Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester. Rochester, New York.

CD-1168 [AAD] © 2005 Music & Arts Programs of America, Inc.

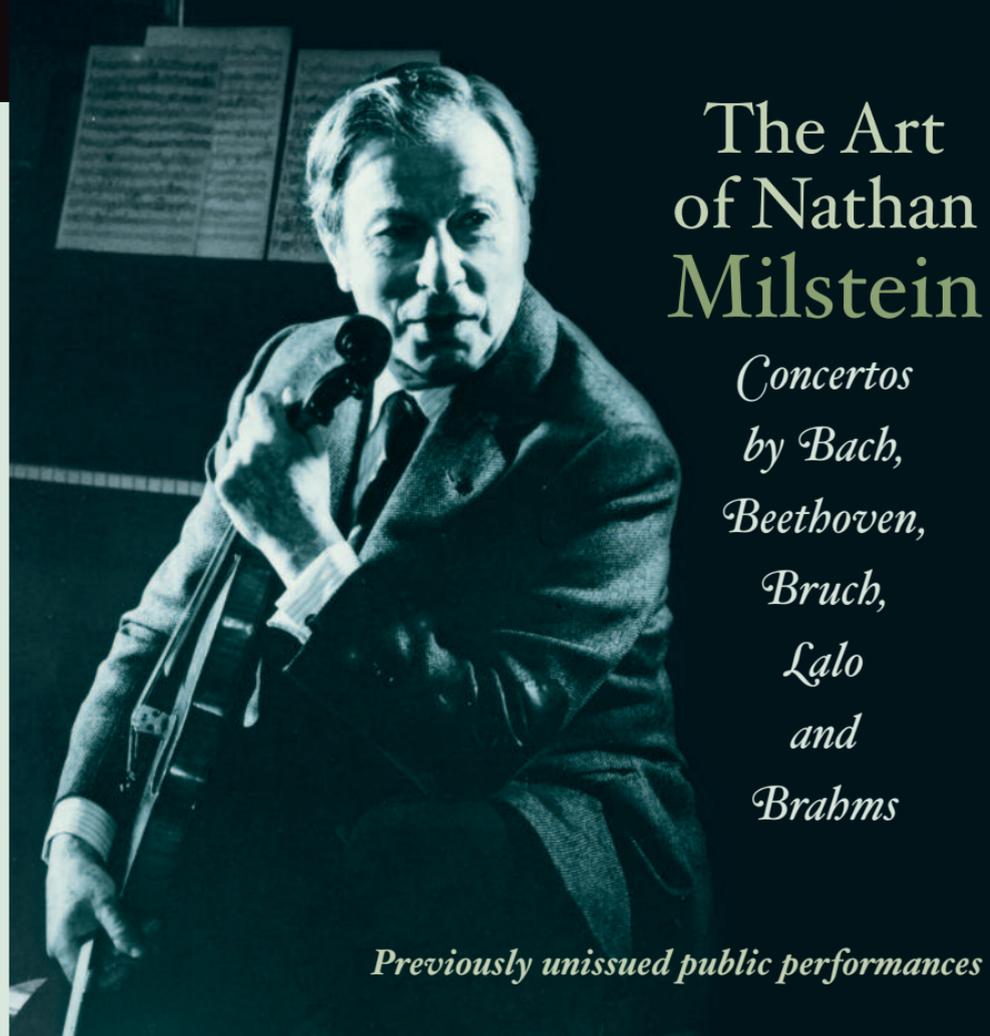
**MUSIC  
& ARTS**  
Programs of America, Inc.

P. O. Box 771, Berkeley, CA 94701 USA

Phone: 510/525-4583 • Fax: 510/524-2111

E-mail: [info@musicandarts.com](mailto:info@musicandarts.com)

Website: [www.musicandarts.com](http://www.musicandarts.com) Ask for our free catalog!



# The Art of Nathan Milstein

Concertos  
by Bach,  
Beethoven,  
Bruch,  
Lalo  
and  
Brahms

Previously unissued public performances

# The Art of Nathan Milstein

## CD No.1

### **BRUCH:** *Violin Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, op. 26*

[Antal Dorati, ORTF, 24 Sept. 1961]

- |   |                                |      |
|---|--------------------------------|------|
| 1 | I. Vorspiel (Allegro moderato) | 8:08 |
| 2 | II. Adagio                     | 8:34 |
| 3 | III. Finale (Allegro energico) | 6:47 |
| 4 | Applause                       | 0:23 |

### **BACH:** *Violin Concerto No. 1 in A Minor BWV 1041*

[Antal Dorati, ORTF, 24 Sept. 1961]

- |   |                    |      |
|---|--------------------|------|
| 5 | I. Allegro         | 3:51 |
| 6 | II. Andante        | 6:25 |
| 7 | III. Allegro assai | 3:54 |
| 8 | Applause           | 0:22 |

### **BRAHMS:** *Violin Concerto in D, op. 77*

[Istvan Kertesz, ORTF, 23 Sept. 1963]

- |    |  |       |
|----|--|-------|
| 9  | I. Allegro non troppo                      | 20:27 |
| 10 | II. Adagio                                 | 9:04  |
| 11 | III. Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace | 7:54  |
| 12 | Applause                                   | 0:16  |

Total Time = 76:13

Such broadcasts and live performances represent the man as possessing qualities and characteristics distinctly different from those of an editor's air-brushed and reassembled studio portrait. But in Milstein's case, the live performances seem equally flattering, if not more so. At the very least, they reveal the injustice of dismissing him as simply a violinist's violinist. He had in his lyre a string for every occasion, even if he reserved the use of that lyre for music—and occasions—of his choosing. But though he may not have been a man for quite all seasons, all seasons flattered him. The Angel catalog was on the right track: It's by his supreme mastery of what he did play, rather than by what he didn't, that he must be judged.

© 2005 ROBERT MAXWELL

ly in the short list of the greatest works in the genre that begins on p. 91 of his autobiography, *From Russia to the West* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1990). He expressed reservations about Bach's Concertos, which he thought belonged under the heading of chamber music; but next he discussed Beethoven's Concerto, which he placed first, divining in it a spiritual message that had somehow sprung out of thin air. He agreed with early critics who considered Bruch's Concerto a better work than Brahms's, despite its being somewhat uneven in inspiration and suffering [like all Bruch's concerted works for the violin] from an inferior finale. He accepted Tchaikovsky's word for the merit of Lalo's *Symphonie*—although it's clear that he also warmed to it personally. (It's a pity that he never recorded two other concertos that make surprising appearances on the list: Berg's, which he claims to have played only with piano out of deference to Louis Krasner, who had commissioned it, and Bartók's Second, which he characterized as a long cadenza-like improvisation.) He recorded all of these concertos several times in the studio: Bruch's with Barbirolli in 1942, with Steinberg in 1953, and with Barzin in 1959; Bach's with Blech in 1956 (an earlier reading that supposedly took place with Golschmann in 1954 hasn't been released), and with a chamber orchestra in 1967 (again, Capitol hasn't released an earlier version from 1965); Brahms with Steinberg in 1953, with Fistoulari in 1960, and with Jochum in 1974; Beethoven with Steinberg in 1955 and with Leinsdorf in 1961; and Lalo with Ormandy in 1942 and with Golschmann in 1954. The live performances—like those of Music and Arts's earlier release including Mozart, Bruch (with Albin, 1969), Dvorak, Brahms (with Monteux, 1950), Goldmark, Prokofiev, and Beethoven (with Maazel, 1959) in live performances from 1942-1969 (a 4 CD set, CD-972), demonstrate the extent to which Milstein played to his audience and well as his composure under pressure.

CD No. 2

**BEETHOVEN:** *Violin Concerto in D, op. 81*

[Eugene Ormandy, Concertgebouw at Montreux, 5 Oct. 1959]

- |   |                          |       |
|---|--------------------------|-------|
| 1 | I. Allegro ma non troppo | 22:11 |
| 2 | II. Larghetto            | 9:52  |
| 3 | III. Rondo (Allegro)     | 8:55  |
| 4 | Applause                 | 0:22  |

**LALO:** *Symphonie Espagnole, op. 21 (short version)*

[Andre Cluytens, ORTF, Jul. 1955]

- |   |                                     |      |
|---|-------------------------------------|------|
| 5 | I. Allegro non troppo               | 7:40 |
| 6 | II. Scherzando: Allegro molto       | 4:00 |
| 7 | IV. [Note: III is omitted.] Andante | 6:32 |
| 8 | V. Rondo: Allegro                   | 6:45 |
| 9 | Applause                            | 0:16 |

Total time = 66:37

*Remastering by Aaron Z. Snyder (2005)*

# Milstein Revisited

Like Fritz Kreisler, whom he revered, Nathan Milstein ventured out on his own during his early teens. Despite a strongly independent streak, he established himself, slowly but surely, as a violinist of formidable technical equipment and of natty taste. Perhaps because of that same independent streak, he proved to be a man of contradictions. Characterized, for example, as an iconoclastic child of the revolution, he likened (in Samuel Applebaum, *With the Artists*, New York: John Markert, 1955) the reverence of an artist toward his art to the humility of one who speaks to a priest representative of his religion. Neither a prodigy like Menuhin nor a marathon practicer like Kubelik, he noodled endlessly to discover hidden violinistic possibilities—Gregor Piatigorsky remarked in his book, *Cellist*, that he hardly ever caught Milstein without a violin in his hands. Though scorning routine (he told Samuel Applebaum that he had had to get away from Kreutzer and Paganini), he built his technique by adapting Chopin’s pianistic passages to the violin. Finally, and perhaps most pointedly, after studying with Leopold Auer for only two years (he had worked with David Oistrakh’s mentor, Piotr Stoliarsky, for the preceding three—a later exploratory meeting with Eugène Ysaÿe came to nothing), he refused to pay tribute to either, though he acknowledged the stimulating influence of Auer’s class.

His observations on life and art revealed the same modestly judicious yet incisive thoughtfulness as did the musical passages he digested and transformed. At the age of ten, for example, he had played Glazunov’s Violin Concerto with the composer himself conducting; but in an interview near the end of his life, (*Nathan Milstein, Master of Invention: Some Memories of a Quiet Magician*, Teldec Video 9031-76374-3) he gruffly dismissed this honor as evidence of outstand-

a performance of Lalo—Tully Potter cited Harry Blech, who conducted the Philharmonia Orchestra at the Goldmark’s recording sessions as remarking that Milstein simply was the Goldmark Concerto).

It’s tempting to represent Milstein as a sort of Hegelian synthesis of Heifetz’s electricity and Kreisler’s warmth. But those who admire Heifetz may be reluctant to rate Milstein at the same high voltage (although even those who don’t respond to Milstein’s musical personality must grudgingly admit that he can be compared only to Heifetz as a technician). Similarly, those who measure musical calories may not descry Kreisler’s *Gemütlichkeit* in Milstein’s more reserved elegance. Yet he somehow displays the characteristics of each of those great violinists—and a suggestion of Oistrakh’s largeness and integrity, Francescatti’s dapper aplomb, and Stern’s sonorous rhetoric, as well. Boris Schwarz, in his survey of the great violinists, wondered why such a violinist didn’t achieve Heifetz’s level of popularity. But glance at their respective catalogs. Milstein programmed many encores, but not so many as did Heifetz. He played many Concertos, but, again, not so many as did Heifetz (where’s his Spohr, Vieuxtemps, Wieniawski, Conus, or, closer to our own time, Walton or Korngold, not to mention the almost forgotten Rózsa and Gruenberg). And so on through the genres. An old Angel catalog boasted whatever Milstein did play, he played perfectly. But perfection may not satisfy insatiable purchasers of recordings. Then, too, Milstein never pandered. Nobody could suggest of him, as Virgil Thomson did of Heifetz, that there was something even slightly vulgar (although the refined vulgarity of a four-star luxury hotel or silk underwear) in his ultra-sophisticated approach. (In fact, Thomson, who admired Milstein, epitomized him in one adjective: “irresistible.”)

Milstein enjoyed a long-standing relationship with the concertos in this collection. In fact, except for Brahms’s, he included them explicit-

later published, nor does it ruminate on so many of the movement's melodic ideas.

Beethoven's Violin Concerto represents the ultimate touchstone of a performer's interpretive maturity; it engaged Milstein both as an explorer of musical ideas and as a composer of cadenzas. Heifetz played the work, woven out of Viotti-like passagework—although transformed to suit Beethoven's darker, stormier musical personality—at tempos that recalled its lineage from its French models. Like most other performers, though (Aaron Rosand represents a recent exception), Milstein takes a more deliberate if not more majestic approach, investing the work with the full weight and seriousness its musical import will bear. Once again, his cadenza sparkles with pyrotechnical highlights. And once again, the version of his cadenza in this recording differs slightly from the one he published later. Notably, he included some Kreisler-like tremolos in performance that he later omitted in print. But its masses of chords recall the magisterial élan with which he dispatched similar Bach-like passages in Goldmark's cadenza.

Of the Concertos in the collection, Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole* seems to contain the most perishable musical message. But Milstein shared Heifetz's alchemistic ability to transmute base metal into gold. And the *Symphonie's* chattering passagework in the fast movements provides Milstein with an ideal opportunity to combine soaring lyricism with dazzling off-the-string bowings, while its slow movement entices him to spice his suave lyricism with the piquant seasonings he sprinkled so amply in the corresponding movement of Dvorák's Concerto. As he did to Goldmark's Concerto, Milstein warmed to Lalo's work, providing a highly personalized, signature interpretation, though his performances of it may not enjoy the Goldmark readings' almost cult-like status among his admirers (upon the occasion of Testament's reissue of Angel's Goldmark Concerto on SBT 1047—coupled, significantly with



ing talent, insisting that to be a prodigy he would have had to play the piece well.

Even if it appears then, that Milstein had been—he at least prided himself on being—largely self-taught, those who don't champion the cause of violinists like Efrem Zimbalist, Benno Rabinoff, or Toscha Seidel might still consider Jascha Heifetz, Mischa Elman, and Milstein the regal triumvirate among Auer's students. Less individual on first blush than the other two, Milstein revealed his identity clearly in passages featuring downward shifts (some upward ones, too, exhibit a strong personality, even if they don't amount to a registered trademark). An opportunity for such a signature presents itself as the first set of chords dissolves into triplets at the beginning of Bruch's Concerto; and until he stamps this measure with his personal seal, a listener might not be sure just which of the great violinists was playing (for his greatness and aristocratic aplomb never come into question, revealing themselves in even the least individual passages). The way he gathered momentum in long runs, too, lent his performances a dash just short of *machismo*. In fact, despite frequent characteristic turns and a velvet command of the bow, he expressed himself primarily—as, arguably, has every other eminent violinistic interpreter—by subtly manipulating rhythm.

Never willful like Elman, he maintained a synoptic metric view, keeping his portamentos, for example, under rhythmic control rather than allowing them to intrude on the regular flow. (The final soaring passage of Bruch's Concerto offers an opportunity for a grand expressive portamento, but even this peroration fits neatly into its surroundings.) Such disciplined finessing, which may have seemed chastely classical in the big Romantic literature, could have rendered his Bach unpalatable to purists. Yet Milstein revered Bach as one of the two greatest composers for the violin (the other being Paganini) and could

never have indulged in unseemly liberties. Still, his recorded performances of Bach's Solo Sonatas and Partitas (he didn't record the sonatas for violin and keyboard, except the one for two violins and continuo, BWV 1037, in which Erica Morini joined him) focused more and more on detail as they lost youthful drive. And he devoted the same care to Bach's concertos as he did to the sonatas and partitas. The outer movements of the Concerto in A Minor can be played by a student (as can the Andante), but lesser artists have found it necessary to sink their individuality in plumbing Bach's musical depths. Like Oistrakh, however, Milstein, realized his fullest potential in just such transcendental moments.

Henry Roth noted that Heifetz's muscularity suited the Brahms Concerto. If Milstein wasn't exactly a body builder, his armamentarium—that time he spent on Chopin's piano pieces taught him to play euphoniously in the most unviolinistic of them—allowed him to conquer even the knotty passages with which Brahms's Concerto abounds. Milstein emerged most identifiably perhaps in passages like the one preceding Brahms's allusion to Viotti's Concerto No. 22 (a work that Brahms had frequently played at home with Joseph Joachim). For a moment, Milstein asserts himself; then Brahms returns full force. Like Heifetz, Milstein made arrangements for his instrument; and some of them, like his *Paganiniana*, his versions of Chopin's Nocturne in C# Minor and Liszt's *Consolation No. 3* and *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* have acquired the warm familiarity of roasting chestnuts. Like Heifetz, too (and, of course, Kreisler), he composed cadenzas for his favorite concertos. The one for Brahms's, which he regularly played, lacks the sheer technical cleverness of Heifetz's, though it certainly displays a wide range of effects; whether it will make the same lasting impression seems a matter that future generations must decide. The version he plays in this recording doesn't include all the varied passagework he