# Johannes Brahms

Violin Concerto in D, Op.77

Double Concerto in A minor, Op.102

**Julia Fischer  Daniel Müller-Schott**

Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra Amsterdam

**Yakov Kreizberg**

PentaTone classics

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SUPER AUDIO CD

**Johannes Brahms** (1833 – 1897)

## Violin Concerto in D, Op. 77

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| 1 | Allegro non troppo (cadenza: Joseph Joachim) | 23. 09 |
| 2 | Adagio | 9. 27 |
| 3 | Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace –Poco più presto | 7. 55 |

## Double Concerto for Violin and Cello in A minor, Op. 102

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| 4 | Allegro | 16. 05 |
| 5 | Andante | 7. 36 |
| 6 | Vivace non troppo – Poco meno allegro – Tempo I | 8. 16 |

**Julia Fischer** - violin
**Daniel Müller-Schott** - cello (Double Concerto)
Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra Amsterdam
conducted by **Yakov Kreizberg**

*Recording venue: Yakult Hall, Beurs van Berlage, Amsterdam*
*(December 2006, Violin Concerto; December 2005, Double Concerto)*
*Executive Producer: Job Maarse*
*Recording Producers: Sebastian Stein (Violin Concerto),*
*Job Maarse (Double Concerto)*
*Balance Engineer: Jean-Marie Geijsen*
*Recording Engineers: Roger de Schot (Violin Concerto),*
*Sebastian Stein (Double Concerto)*
*Editing: Sebastian Stein*

*Total playing-time: 72. 59*

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*"I have never before come across such a major talent. He is years ahead of me."*

Thus spoke the Hungarian violinist and composer Joseph Joachim of his colleague Johannes Brahms, who was his junior by two years. Joachim and Brahms had met each other in Hanover in 1853, and from that moment onwards they became inseparable. Not only did they give many concerts together, but during 1853 and 1854 Brahms even lived in Joachim's household for some time. In a letter to his girlfriend Gisela von Arnim, dated October 20, 1854, Joachim gives a detailed characterization of his friend. He writes the following: "Brahms is the most confirmed egotist that one can imagine, although he is not aware of it himself as, thanks to his sanguine nature, everything truly pours forth from his quill without effort in the most direct act of genius – however, now and then with a lack of consideration (not with a lack of support, as that would be all right with me!) that hurts, as it shows a lack of culture." This sounds as if Joachim considered Brahms to be an egocentric clodhopper, but on the other hand, he genuinely admired the

## "Frei, aber einsam" "Frei, aber froh"

*Joseph Joachim*

ideals for which Brahms strove, without making any compromises: "All he cares about is being undisturbed in the bliss he encounters in his music, in his belief in searching for a higher, fantastic world – and the way he manages to avoid all unhealthy emotions and imagined grief of others is the true work of a genius – in that way, he is truly healthy, just as his carefree approach to life itself is highly appealing, yea, even magnificent."

At that time, Brahms was an avid reader of romantic literature and a fervent supporter of the romantic theory of art. For instance, he read Jean Paul and Novalis, and jotted down various interesting statements by these writers in a little notebook which he had entitled "Schatzkästlein des jungen Kreislers" (= the little treasure trove of the young Kreisler), with a nod to the fantasy figure from Schumann's *Davidsbund*. Joseph Joachim also tended to write a short note in this book every so often, mostly in the form of an aphorism. The following aphorism about the relationship between man and artist is very striking: "Only *that* person is a complete artist, for whom life intervenes to glorify art, and vice versa – the person for whom art is not a random matter to be donned and removed like a piece of jewellery." A conspicuous fact is that Joachim signed most of these aphorisms with the initials f.a.e., which he sometimes also jotted down as notes.

The abbreviation "f.a.e." stands for Joachim's motto, "frei, aber einsam" (= free, but lonely), which Brahms also liked to use. Thus he wrote as follows to Joachim in 1888: "For me, f.a.e. remains a symbol, and I am happy to bless it, in spite of everything." Furthermore, Brahms also used his own motto which, in view of his light-hearted character (as described by Joachim), can be considered characteristic of him: f.a.f: "frei, aber froh" (= free, but happy).

As a symbol, f.a.e. attained almost a cult status. Thus a private concert took place on October 28, 1853 in the house of Robert and Clara Schumann, during which a surprise was sprung on Joachim: he was presented with a violin sonata based on the motto f.a.e., which had been especially composed for him jointly by Robert Schumann, Albert Dietrich and Johannes Brahms. In fact, Brahms wrote almost all his

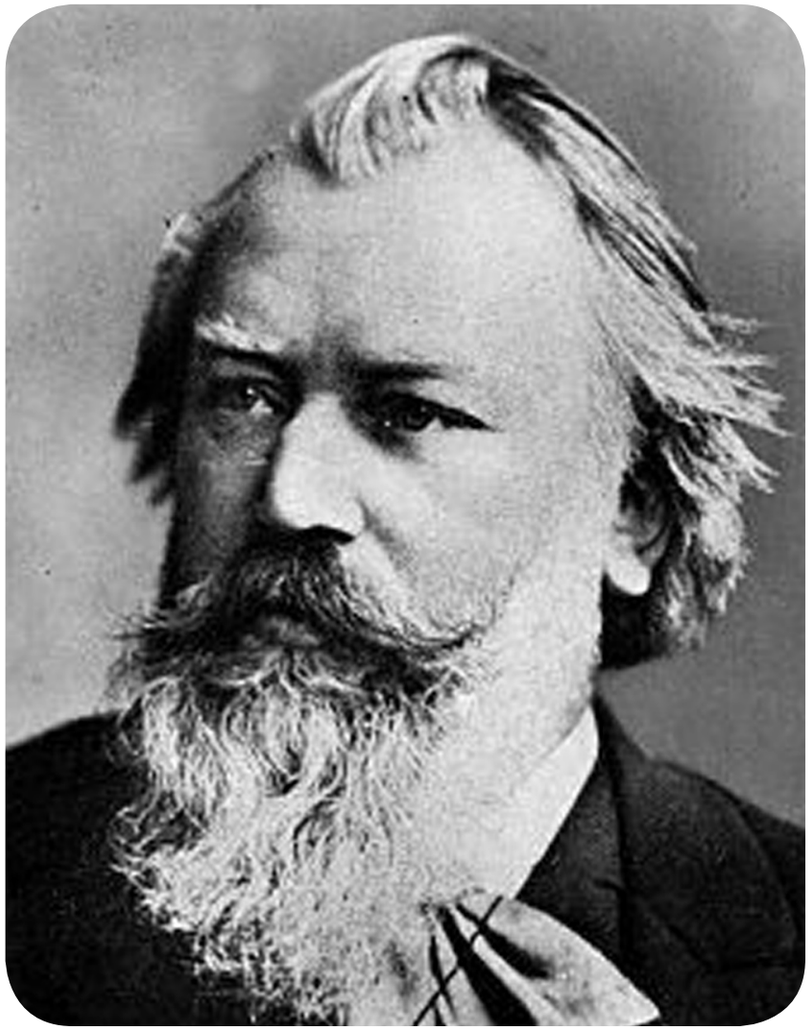
violin works for Joachim, and also regularly asked advice of the violin virtuoso, as he himself did not play this instrument. In his turn, Joachim had repeatedly urged Brahms to compose a violin concerto for him. However, he made it clear that he did not wish the work to be written in the style of the Romantic virtuoso concertos: it was to be a symphonic concerto to continue in the line of Beethoven's Violin Concerto. (Thanks to Joachim's performances, this concert was accepted at the time as standard concert repertoire). During the summer of 1878, spent as usual in the Austrian village of Pörtschach am Wörthersee, Brahms wrote a concerto for violin and orchestra, keeping in mind the performance style of his friend. In August, he sent Joachim a couple of "violin passages to try out". The latter reacted enthusiastically, and soon the passages expanded into the finale of the Violin Concerto in D. Brahms worked like a man possessed. At a certain point, the two middle movements of the originally four-movement concerto disappeared into the waste-paper basket and were replaced by the Adagio; the middle movement as we know it now. On January 1, 1879 Joseph Joachim gave the first performance of Brahms' new Violin Concerto at the Leipzig Gewandhaus, with the composer himself conducting.

Brahms' Violin Concerto most certainly deserves the qualification of a symphonic concerto; one need only to listen to the orchestral introduction of no less than 90 bars! Nevertheless, it still offers plenty of room to demonstrate virtuoso playing – especially in the cadenza, which Brahms had left to the fantasy of Joachim, and in the finale, which is indebted to the Hungarian salon style so popular in Austria during the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, that did not manage to protect the work against critics who held other expectations of solo concertos. Hans von Bülow wrote the following: "Max Bruch's Violin Concerto in G is for the violin, but Brahms's Concerto is clearly *against* it." And according to various reports, Pablo de Sarasate, the great Spanish violin virtuoso decided against including the concerto in his repertoire, as he refused to stand by with the violin idle in his hands to listen to the breathtakingly beautiful oboe solo which introduces the slow movement.

But when Brahms took the side

of Joachim's wife, the mezzo-soprano Amalie Schneeweiss, during divorce procedures in 1880, the relationship between Brahms and Joachim cooled off considerably. Clara Schumann reports that the two friends even refused to speak to one another for a number of years, although Joachim continued to perform Brahms' music. In order to break through this impasse, Brahms wrote his Double Concerto for Violin, Cello and Orchestra in the summer of 1887, hoping that Joachim would take on the violin part. Indeed, that turned out to be the case: on October 18 that year, the first performance of the Double Concerto took place in Cologne, featuring Joseph Joachim on the violin, Robert Hausman on the cello, and Brahms as conductor. Joachim was grateful for Brahms' gesture and the rift between the two friends was repaired. Clara Schumann writes as follows: "This concerto is as it were a work of reconciliation - Joachim and Brahms are now talking to each other again for the first time in years."

The Double Concerto contains a good many musical references to the friendship between Joachim and Brahms. Thus it contains a number of



allusions to the Violin Concerto in A minor by Giovanni Battista Viotti: this was one of Joachim's favourite showpieces, of which Brahms was also very fond. But there is more. The thematic material of the first movement is based on the f.a.e motif. When the soloists enter with a cadenza-like passage on top of the main theme, it is the solo violin that opens with the notes f.e.a. (an inversion, which was also often employed by Joachim). Finally, at the

end of the first movement, following many dialogues between the solo instruments, there is a long passage in which both soloists play in thirds: perhaps a musical symbol for the rediscovered friendship?

"Frei, aber einsam" (= free, but lonely): the motto for the friendship between Brahms and Joachim, two great masters who were connected by their capricious approach to life. Just as Joachim never again felt any desire to commit himself to another woman after the break-up of his marriage, Brahms never even got married. Just before beginning work on his Double Concerto, he wrote as follows to his 'confidante' Clara Schumann: "I need absolute solitude, not just in order to achieve my very best, but also simply to think my own thoughts. That is my nature. However, on the other hand, it is also very easy to explain: after all, someone who, like myself, enjoys life and art, is only too eager to enjoy both – and to forget all the rest. Perhaps it is also the most correct and sensible thing to do. But right now, with a new, major work in front of me, I am still quite happy about it, and have to say to myself: I would not have written it, had I been enjoying life so exuberantly along the Rhine and in Berchtesgaden."

*Ronald Vermeulen*

*English translation: Fiona J. Stroker-Gale*

## Julia Fischer

Julia Fischer is ranked as one of the leading violinists of the day, captivating audiences world-wide with her music. She was born in Munich in 1983, of German-Slovak parents, and began her musical training at just four years old. At nine, she began receiving lessons from the renowned violin teacher Ana Chumachenco. In 2006, she was appointed professor at the "Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst" in Frankfurt am Main.

Winning the international Yehudi Menuhin Competition in 1995, with the great violinist himself conducting, was a significant milestone in her lightning career. The following year, she won the 8th Eurovision Competition for Young Instrumentalists. Since then, Julia Fischer has performed with reputed conductors and leading orchestras throughout the world. Many of her concerts have been recorded for and/or

broadcast live on radio and television.

Julia Fischer receives regular invitations from the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington D.C., the Philadelphia Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, among others, to perform in the USA. She also plays with the leading European orchestras, including the Vienna Symphonic, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, the Staatskapelle Dresden and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. She has an especially close relationship with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, which she first led in January 2006 during a tour of Germany, with which she made history later on in the autumn, performing in Frankfurt to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the reopening of the Alte Oper. Another major tour of Germany, Austria and the Benelux is planned for 2009, to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the foundation of the Academy.

Julia Fischer was appointed Artist in Residence at the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, under Chief Conductor Yakov Kreizberg, for the 2006/2007 season. Further joint projects with Maestro Kreizberg include her first appearance at the London PROMS in summer 2008. Julia Fischer also forms a chamber-music duo with Yakov Kreizberg at the piano: they will first perform as a duo in May 2007 in recital in Valencia. Furthermore, Julia Fischer has so far recorded all her CDs with orchestral music together with Maestro Kreizberg.

Other major conductors with whom Julia Fischer has performed include: Lorin Maazel, Christoph Eschenbach, Yuri Temirkanov, Sir Neville Marriner, David Zinman, Jun Märkl, Ruben Gazarian, Emmanuel Krivine and Marek Janowski.

Julia Fischer is an ardent chamber musician, and performs regularly with Jean-Yves Thibaudet and Daniel Müller-Schott, among others. She receives invitations to play at the major international festivals, such as London's Mostly Mozart Festival, the Aspen Music Festival, the Ravinia Festival, the Prague Spring Festival, the St. Petersburg Winter Festival, the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, and the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, where she was awarded the Soloist Prize in 1997.

In 2004, her first CD was released

by PentaTone - the label for which Julia Fischer records exclusively - entitled Russian Violin Concertos with the Russian National Orchestra (under Yakov Kreizberg), which was awarded the *Echo Klassik 2005*. Her latest recording - Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto - was released in November 2006, with the same orchestra and conductor. All CD releases of the young violinist have received major recognition and awards – many have received a *Diapason d'Or* as well as a *Choc* from the *Monde de la Musique*. Her recording of Bach's Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin was even voted the *BBC Music Magazine Award* as "Best Newcomer 2006" and the *Diapason d'Or de l'Année*. Meanwhile, PentaTone has released the second CD of Mozart Violin Concertos featuring Julia Fischer with the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra; Piano Trios by Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, together with Daniel Müller-Schott and Jonathan Gilad; and the Brahms Violin Concerto and Double Concerto, together with Daniel Müller-Schott. Further recordings are soon to be added to her discography.

Most recently, Julia Fischer has also been concentrating on contemporary music. As a consequence, she has already given the first performance of Matthias Pintscher's Piano Trio together with Jean-Yves Thibaudet and Daniel Müller-Schott. During the 2006-2007 season, she is performing Maazel's Violin Concerto, accompanied by the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as Nicholas Maw's Violin Concerto at the Aspen Music Festival.

Julia Fischer plays on an Italian violin made by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini, dating from 1750.

*www.juliafischer.com*

## Daniel Müller-Schott

*"A great cellist, like a great tenor, should sound like no-one else. I bring Pablo Casals and Mstislav Rostropovich up in order to suggest that young Daniel Müller-Schott may soon be in their league."*
*Octavio Roca, The Miami Herald*

In only a few years, Daniel Müller-Schott has succeeded in establishing himself throughout the world as one of the supreme cellists. With his sure sense of style and enormous musical maturity, he opens up new

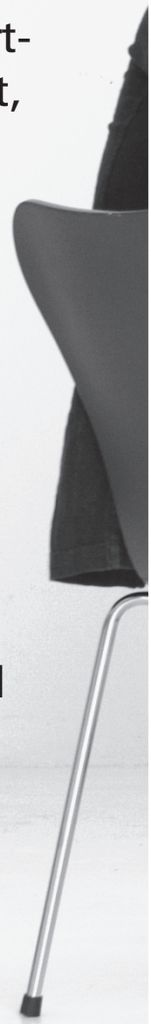
paths for his audiences, including ones leading to works already thought to be well-known. He is constantly searching for both new and rare old works with which he can extend his repertoire on the cello, including with his own adaptations, and in particular performances of the music of the 20th and 21st centuries.

As a soloist, Daniel Müller-Schott works with such renowned conductors as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Charles Dutoit, Christoph Eschenbach, Michael Gielen, Hartmut Haenchen, Marek Janowski, Armin Jordan, James Judd, Yakov Kreizberg, Kurt Masur and Sir André Previn. His concerts are with orchestras such as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Hamburg NDR Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestre National de France, the Israel Symphony Orchestra, the Nederlands Philharmonisch Orkest, the Warsaw National Philharmonia, the Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra Moscow, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the Philharmonia Orchestra London.

In 2006 Daniel Müller-Schott will be making guest appearances as a soloist in many European countries as well as in the United States, Canada and South-East Asia. In August 2006, Daniel Müller-Schott will be making his first appearance at the Salzburger Festspiele with an evening of chamber music.

Recitals, solo evenings and trio concerts will also be taking him to the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, the Musikhalle Hamburg, the Philharmonie München, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and the Tonhalle Zürich. In addition to Anne-Sophie Mutter und Sir André Previn, his chamber music partners include Vadim Repin, Lars Vogt, Steven Isserlis, Robert Kulek, Julia Fischer, Olli Mustonen, Christian Tetzlaff and Jean-Yves Thibaudet.

Daniel Müller-Schott studied under Walter Nothas, Heinrich Schiff and Steven Isserlis. He benefited from the personal sponsorship and support of Anne-Sophie Mutter as the holder of a scholarship from her Foundation. At the age of 15 he won international acclaiming by taking first prize at Moscow's International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians. Daniel Müller-Schott plays



a Matteo Goffriller cello, made in Venice in 1700. The 29-year-old musician lives in Munich, his home-town. In his spare time he is an enthusiastic jogger and badminton player. He is very interested in art, and feels a strong affinity with 19th century French painters; it is the way they treat colours and light which constantly fascinates and inspires him.

*www.daniel-mueller-schott.com*

## Yakov Kreizberg

The Russian-born American conductor Yakov Kreizberg currently holds the posts of Chief Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra and the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, as well as Principal Guest Conductor of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. From 1995 to 2000, he was Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, and during 1994 to 2001 he held the post of Generalmusikdirector of the Komische Oper Berlin.

In demand across the globe, Yakov Kreizberg has conducted orchestras throughout Europe, including the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Berlin Philharmonic, WDR Köln, NDR Hamburg, Staatskapelle Dresden and Munich Philharmonic, with which he works regularly. He has also worked with the Deutsches Sinfonie-Orchester Berlin, Bayerische Rundfunk, Orchestre de Paris, Tonhalle Orchestra Zürich, Royal Concertgebouw, London Symphony Orchestra, and Philharmonia Orchestra; he is a frequent guest at the BBC Proms.

Within North America, Yakov Kreizberg regularly works with prestigious orchestras including the Philadelphia Orchestra (with which he toured the Americas), Pittsburgh Orchestra, Cincinnati Orchestra, and Minnesota Orchestra; he has also conducted the Los Angeles and New York Philharmonics, and the Chicago and Boston Symphony Orchestras.

Besides having recorded for Decca and Oehms Classics, Yakov Kreizberg's current collaboration with Pentatone Classics and the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra has been extremely successful. With Pentatone Classics, Mr. Kreizberg has recorded an award-winning disc with Julia Fischer and the Russian National Orchestra, whereas his first recording

with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra – of Bruckner's Symphony No.7 – was nominated in two categories (including best orchestral performance) for the 2006 Grammy Awards.

At the Komische Oper, Mr. Kreizberg established a fine reputation in a wide variety of repertoire. Elsewhere, he has conducted the Canadian Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, English National Opera and on a number of occasions the Glyndebourne Festival Opera. He has recently conducted *Iolanthe* with Netherlands Opera and returns in 2007/08 for *Katya Kabanova*. As part of the 2004 Bregenz Festival, he conducted Weill's Der Protagonist and *Royal Palace* with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, and in 2006 he made his début at the *Royal Opera* House with *Macbeth.*Yakov Kreizberg was born in St Petersburg and studied conducting privately with Ilya A. Musin, (the renowned Professor of Conducting at the St. Petersburg Conservatory), before emigrating to the United States in 1976. There, he was awarded conducting fellowships at Tanglewood with Bernstein, Ozawa and Leinsdorf, as well as at the Los Angeles Philharmonic Institute. In 1986, he won first prize in the Leopold Stokowski Conducting Competition in New York.

*www.yakovkreizberg.com*

## Nederlands Kamerorkest

The Nederlands Kamerorkest (= Netherlands Chamber Orchestra) was founded in 1955 and gave its first concert that year during the Holland Festival. Szymon Goldberg – the legendary violinist, conductor and pedagogue – was artistic director of the ensemble for the first 22 years. Goldberg then appointed David Zinman as second conductor (alongside himself) and, jointly, they raised the level of the orchestra to equal that of any top international chamber ensemble. They were succeeded in 1979 by Antoni Ros Marbà, who led the orchestra until 1986. From 1986 to 2002, Hartmut Haenchen was chief conductor of the ensemble, with Philippe Entremont as permanent guest conductor.

Since 2003, Yakov Kreizberg has been chief conductor of the Nederlands Kamerorkest. In September 2004, top violinist Gordan Nikolic was appointed Artistic Direc-

tor and Leader of the Nederlands Kamerorkest. As such, he regularly leads the orchestra from within.

The Nederlands Kamerorkest gives about 25 concerts per year in the major Dutch concert halls, including the Concertgebouw. Each season, the orchestra also accompanies a number of productions of the Nederlandse Opera at the Muziektheater in Amsterdam. Apart from the many Rossini and Mozart operas, the orchestra has performed numerous contemporary operas to great critical acclaim. For instance, the world-première of Alexander Knaifel's *Alice* in September 2001; and the production of *Tea* by the Chinese/American composer Tan Dun in January 2003 was also a major success. In March 2005, the orchestra accompanied Bellini's opera *Norma*, and performances of Rossini's *Il barbiere de Siviglia* are scheduled for January 2006. In autumn 2006, the orchestra will accompany the Nederlandse Opera in the Mozart-Da Ponte trilogy at the Amsterdam Muziektheater.

The Nederlands Kamerorkest has toured extensively to countries such as the United States, Middle and South America, Canada, Australia, Japan, China and almost all European countries. It has performed at many festivals, including the Wiener Festwochen, Prager Frühling, Edinburgh Festival, Granada Festival and La Folle Journée (Nantes 2002).

Since its foundation, the Nederlands Kamerorkest has worked with prominent guest conductors such as Darius Milhaud, Rudolf Barshai, Carlo Maria Giulini, Erich Leinsdorf, Yehudi Menuhin, Hans Vonk and Edo de Waart. The numerous world-famous soloists who have performed with the orchestra include Elly Ameling, Maurice André, Martha Argerich, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Alfred Brendel, Gidon Kremer, Radu Lupu, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Isabelle van Keulen, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Marie-Claire Alain, Han de Vries and Mstislav Rostropovich. During a successful three-year project, Christian Zacharias performed Mozart's complete piano concertos from behind the piano.

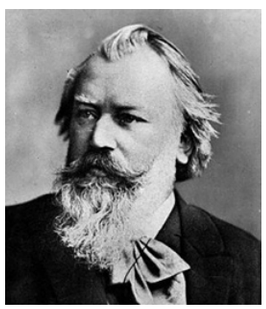
The Nederlands Kamerorkest has an extensive repertoire available on CD. Some recordings dating from the LP era – which include a Mozart Piano Concerto featuring Martha Arger-

ich, and Szymon Goldberg's Bach programmes – have since been re-released on CD for their historic value, and new CD recordings on the Penta-Tone label are scheduled. (Please surf to www.orkest.nl to view the orchestra's comprehensive discography.)

During the 2005-2006 season, the Nederlands Kamerorkest celebrated its 50th anniversary with an anniversary concert at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, among others.

*www.orkest.nl*

## „Frei, aber einsam“ „Frei, aber froh“



*„Mir ist noch niemals ein derart großes Talent begegnet. Er ist mir um Jahre voraus.“*

So lautete das Urteil des ungarischen Geigers und Komponisten Joseph Joachim über seinen zwei Jahre jüngeren Kollegen Johannes Brahms. Joachim und Brahms waren sich 1853 in Hannover begegnet und von dort an schier unzertrennlich. Beide gaben nicht nur eine Vielzahl gemeinsamer Konzerten, sondern Brahms wohnte auch in den Jahren 1853 und 1854 im Hause Joachim. In einem vom 20. Oktober 1854 datierten Brief an die befreundete Gisela von Arnim gibt Joachim eine detaillierte Charakterstudie seines Freundes. So schreibt er: *„Brahms ist der eingefleischte Egoist, den man sich denken kann, ohne dass er es selbst wüsste, wie denn überhaupt Alles bei ihm in unmittelbarster Genialität ächt unbesorgt aus seiner sanguinischen Natur hervorquillt – bisweilen aber mit einer Rücksichtslosigkeit (nicht Rückhaltlosigkeit, denn das wäre mir recht!), die verletzt, weil sie Unbildung verräth.“* Danach wäre Brahms nichts weiter als ein egozentrischer, ja ungehobelter Klotz, doch dem steht Joachims wirklich aufrechte Bewunderung für jene Ideale gegenüber, auf die Brahms kompromisslos abzielte: *„Ungestört seiner Musikseligkeit, seinem Glauben an eine höhere fantastische Art, sich alle ungesunden Empfindungen und eingebildeten Schmerzen Anderer vom Hals zu halten – darin ist er wahrhaft gesund, wie denn auch seine Sorglosigkeit für die Existenz in ihm schön, ja grossartig ist.“*

In dieser Phase seines Lebens war Brahms ein nahezu besessener Leser der romantischen Literatur und

ein glühender Anhänger der romantischen Kunsttheorie. So las er etwa Jean Paul und Novalis und notierte sich interessante Aussagen dieser Schriftsteller in einem Notizbuch, dem er in Anlehnung an eine Fantasiefigur aus Schumanns „Davidsbündler“ den Titel „Schatzkästlein des jungen Kreisler“ gegeben hatte. Auch Joseph Joachim schrieb dann und wann kurze Bemerkungen, meist Aphorismen in dieses Büchlein. Ein besonders treffender beschreibt etwa das Verhältnis zwischen Mensch und Künstler: *„Nur der Mensch ist ganzer Künstler, bei dem das Leben in die Kunst, diese in das Leben verherrlichend eingreift, der Mensch, dem die Kunst nichts Zufälliges ist, das er wie ein Geschmeide nach Belieben um- und abhängt.“* Bemerkenswert ist die Tatsache, dass Joachim die meisten seiner Aphorismen mit den Initialen f.a.e. unterzeichnete – mal in Buchstaben, mal in Notenform.

Die Abkürzung f.a.e. steht für „frei, aber einsam“, jenes Lebensmotto von Joachim, das auch Brahms gerne für sich in Anspruch nahm. So schreibt er 1888 an Joachim: *„Für mich ist f.a.e. ein Symbol geblieben, und darf ich es, trotz allem, wohl segnen.“* Außerdem

hatte Brahms noch ein eigenes Motto, das man in Anlehnung an die von Joachim beschriebene Sorglosigkeit des Komponisten wohl als charakteristisch bezeichnen kann: f.a.f. – „frei, aber froh".

Das Symbol f.a.e. errang beinahe Kultstatus. So fand am 28. Oktober 1853 im Haus von Clara und Robert Schumann eine geschlossene Konzertveranstaltung statt, bei der Joachim mit einer eigens für ihn von Robert Schumann, Albert Dietrich und Johannes Brahms komponierten Violinsonate überrascht wurde, die auf dem Motiv f.a.e. basierte.

Brahms komponierte übrigens beinahe alle seiner Violinwerke für Joachim und fragte den Geiger auch regelmäßig um Rat, da er das Instrument selber nicht beherrschte. Joachim hatte Brahms wiederholt gedrungen, doch ein Violinkonzert für ihn zu schreiben. Das Werk sollte stilistisch aber nicht dem romantischen Virtuosenkonzert folgen, sondern vielmehr ein symphonisches Konzert werden, das den Beethovenschen Gattungsbeitrag fortsetzt (der durch Joachims Aufführungen einen festen Platz im Konzertrepertoire gefunden

hatte). Im Sommer 1878, Brahms hielt sich wie gewöhnlich im österreichischen Pörtschach am Wörthersee auf, schrieb er – mit seinen Gedanken beim Spiel des Freundes – ein Konzert für Violine und Orchester. Im August erhielt Joachim einige *„Violinpassagen zum Ausprobieren“*. Dessen Reaktionen waren enthusiastisch und die Passagen wuchsen sich rasch zum Finale des D-Dur-Violinkonzertes aus. Brahms arbeitete wie ein Besessener. Die beiden Mittelsätze des ursprünglich viersätzigen Werkes landeten schließlich im Papierkorb und wurden das Adagio ersetzt, das wir heute als Mittelsatz kennen. Am 1. Januar 1879 brachte Joseph Joachim das neue Violinkonzert von Brahms im Gewandhaus zu Leipzig zur Uraufführung. Der Komponist stand am Pult.

Mit Fug und Recht kann man das Violinkonzert als symphonisches Konzert bezeichnen, darauf weist bereits die Orchestereinleitung hin, die nicht weniger als 90 Takte umfasst! Und doch bleibt auch Raum für die Virtuosität, vor allem in der Kadenz, die Brahms der Fantasie von Joachim überließ, sowie im Finale, das dem im Österreich des 19. Jahrhunderts so populären ungarischen Salon-Stil verpflichtet ist. Aber das konnte das Werk nicht vor den Kritikern retten, die einfach andere Erwartungen an ein Solokonzert hatten. So schrieb etwa Hans von Bülow: „Max Bruchs Violinkonzert in G-Dur ist *für* die Violine, das von Brahms aber *dagegen* geschrieben.“ Und der große spanische Violinvirtuose Pablo de Sarasate wollte das Konzert wie verlautet nicht in sein Repertoire aufnehmen, da er sich weigerte, mit der Violine in der Hand dem atemberaubenden Oboensolo zuzuhören, das den langsamen Satz eröffnet.

Das Verhältnis zwischen Brahms und Joachim kühlte merklich ab, als Brahms 1880 im Scheidungskrieg zwischen Joachim und seiner Gemahlin, der Mezzosopranistin Amalie Schneeweiss, Partei für diese ergriff. Clara Schumann berichtet, dass die beiden Freunde mehrere Jahre überhaupt nicht miteinander sprechen wollten, obwohl Joachim weiterhin Werke von Brahms spielte. Um aus dieser Sackgasse herauszukommen, komponierte Brahms im Sommer 1887 ein Doppelkonzert für Violine, Violoncello und Orchester. Er hoffte, dass Joachim sich bereit erklären

würde, den Geigenpart zu übernehmen. So kam es auch und am 18. Oktober 1887 spielten Joseph Joachim und der Cellist Robert Hausmann unter der Leitung von Brahms die Uraufführung des Doppelkonzerts in Köln. Joachim zeigte sich dankbar für Brahms' Geste und der Bruch zwischen beiden war gekittet. Clara Schumann schreibt: *„Es ist dies Konzert gewissermaßen ein Versöhnungswerk – Joachim und Brahms haben sich seit Jahren zum erste Male wieder gesprochen."*

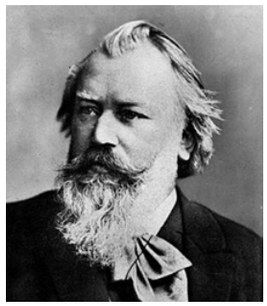
Das Doppelkonzert enthält zahlreiche musikalische Verweise auf die Freundschaft zwischen Joachim und Brahms. So umfasst das Werk einige Anspielungen auf das Violinkonzert a-moll von Giovanni Battista Viotti, eines von Joachims Paradestücken, das auch Brahms sehr schätzte; aber es gibt noch mehr Zusammenhänge. Das thematische Material des Kopfsatzes basiert auf dem f.a.e.-Motiv. Wenn die Solisten mit einer kadenzartigen Passage über das Hauptthema einsetzen, ist es die Violine, die mit den Tönen f – e – a (einer von Joachim oft benutzten Umkehrung) beginnt. Am Ende des ersten Satzes, nach mehreren Dialogen zwischen den Solo-Instrumenten, taucht schließlich eine Passage auf, in der die beiden Solisten in Terzen voranschreiten – ein musikalisches Symbol für die wiedergefundene Freundschaft?

„Frei, aber einsam" – das Motto der Freundschaft zwischen Brahms und Joachim, zweier Meister ihres Faches, die durch ihren eigensinnigen Lebenswandel verbunden waren. Denn wie sich Joachim nach seiner gescheiterten Ehe nie wieder an eine Frau binden wollte, so blieb Brahms sein Leben lang Junggeselle. An seine „Herzensfreundin" Clara Schumann schrieb er kurz bevor er die Arbeit am Doppelkonzert begann: *„Ich brauche die absolute Einsamkeit, nicht sowohl um das mir Mögliche zu leisten, sondern um nur überhaupt an meine Sache zu denken. Das liegt an meinem Naturell, es ist aber auch sonst einfach zu erklären. Wer nun, wie ich Freude am Leben und an der Kunst ausser sich hat, der ist nur zu geneigt, beides zu geniessen – und andres zu vergessen. Es möchte auch wohl das Richtigste und Gescheiteste sein. Aber, gerade jetzt, da ein neues grösseres Werk vor mir liegt, freue ich mich doch ein wenig seiner und muss mir sagen: ich hätte es nicht geschrieben, wenn ich mich*

*am Rhein und in Berchtesgaden noch so schön des Lebens gefreut hätte.“*

*Ronald Vermeulen*
*Aus dem Niederländischen*
*von Franz Steiger*

## „Frei, aber einsam“ „Frei, aber froh“



*« Je n’ai jamais rencontré quelqu’un d’aussi talentueux. Il a des années d’avance sur moi. »*

Ainsi parlait le violoniste et compositeur hongrois Joseph Joachim de son collègue Johannes Brahms, son cadet de deux ans. Joachim et Brahms se rencontrèrent en 1853 à Hanovre et devinrent inséparables. En plus des nombreux concerts qu’ils donnèrent ensemble, Brahms vécut quelque temps chez Joachim en 1853 et 1854. Dans une lettre à son amie Gisela von Arnim, datée du 20 octobre 1854, Joachim trace un portrait détaillé du caractère de son ami : « Brahms est un égoïste invétéré, bien qu’il ne s’en rende lui-même pas compte, car grâce à sa nature optimiste, tout coule véritablement sans effort de sa plume, dans le plus pur trait de génie – alors que toutefois, entre-temps, il fait montre d’un manque de considération (et non pas d’un manque de soutien, ce qui ne me poserait aucun problème !) blessant, car exprimant un manque de culture. » Bien que Joachim semble considérer Brahms comme un ours mal léché égocentrique, il éprouve en revanche un véritable émerveillement pour les idéaux que Brahms poursuit sans concession aucune : « La seule chose qui l’intéresse est de pouvoir jouir sans être dérangé de la béatitude que lui procure la musique, de sa conviction de la recherche d’un monde fantastique – et la façon dont il parvient à esquiver toute émotion malsaine et peine imaginée des autres tient véritablement du génie – et il y excelle, tout comme son approche prudente de la vie elle-même est extrêmement séduisante, et même magnifique. »

À l’époque, Brahms fut un lecteur impénitent de littérature romantique et un fervent adepte de la théorie artistique romantique. Il lut par exemple Jean Paul et Novalis, et nota divers propos intéressants de ces auteurs dans un carnet auquel il avait donné, en clin d’œil au personnage de fantaisie de l’Alliance de David de Schumann,

le nom de « Schatzkästlein des jungen Kreislers » (le petit trésor du jeune Kreisler). Joseph Joachim y nota lui aussi de temps à autres quelques mots, souvent sous la forme d'un aphorisme. L'un d'entre eux, particulièrement saisissant, touche à la relation entre l'homme et l'artiste : « Seul est un artiste complet *celui* pour qui la vie survient pour la gloire de l'art et vice-versa – celui pour qui l'art n'est pas quelque chose que l'on met et retire par hasard comme un bijou. » On note que Joachim signa la plupart de ces aphorismes par les initiales *f.a.e.*, parfois également sous forme de notes.

L'abréviation *f.a.e.*, signifiant « frei, aber einsam » (libre, mais seul), était la devise de Joachim, que Brahms se plut lui aussi à employer. C'est ainsi qu'il écrivit à Joachim en 1888 : « Pour moi, *f.a.e.* demeure un symbole et je suis heureux de lui rendre grâce en dépit de tout. » Brahms avait en outre sa propre devise, qui compte tenu de l'insouciance décrite par Joachim, peut être qualifiée de caractéristique : *f.a.f.*, soit « libre, mais joyeux ».

Le symbole *f.a.e.* acquit presque un statut « culte ». Ainsi, le 28 octobre 1853, un concert privé fut donné au domicile de Robert et Clara Schumann, au cours duquel Joachim eut la surprise d'entendre une sonate pour violon basée sur le motif musical *f.a.e.* et spécialement composé à son effet par Robert Schumann, Albert Dietrich et Johannes Brahms.

Brahms écrivit presque toutes ses œuvres pour violon à l'intention de Joachim et demanda régulièrement son avis au violoniste virtuose puisqu'il ne jouait pas lui-même de cet instrument. À son tour, Joachim pressa Brahms à maintes reprises de composer pour lui un concerto pour violon. Cependant, il ne le voulait pas dans le style des concertos virtuoses romantiques, mais désirait un concerto symphonique dans la lignée du concerto pour violon de Beethoven. Grâce aux interprétations de Joachim, ce concerto acquit d'ailleurs à l'époque une place au répertoire standard. Pendant l'été 1878, que Brahms passa comme d'habitude en Autriche, à Pörtschach am Wöthersee, il composa un concerto pour violon et orchestre avec à l'idée le style d'interprétation de son ami. Joachim reçut au mois d'août quelques « passages pour le violon, à titre d'essai ». Sa réaction fut

enthousiaste et les passages s'enrichirent rapidement pour devenir le finale du concerto pour violon en Ré majeur auquel Brahms travaillait avec acharnement. À un moment donné, les deux mouvements centraux du concerto en quatre mouvements disparurent dans la corbeille à papier et furent remplacés par l'Adagio – le mouvement central tel que nous le connaissons aujourd'hui. Le 1er janvier 1879, Joseph Joachim joua pour la première fois le nouveau concerto pour violon de Brahms à la Gewandhaus de Leipzig, avec le compositeur lui-même au pupitre.

Le concerto pour violon de Brahms mérite à très juste titre le qualificatif de concert symphonique. Il suffit d'en écouter l'introduction orchestrale avec ses pas moins de 90 mesures ! Néanmoins, suffisamment de place a été ménagée pour des démonstrations de virtuosité, notamment dans la cadence, que Brahms avait laissé à l'imagination de Joachim, et dans le finale, tributaire du style hongrois de salon, si populaire en Autriche au dix-neuvième siècle. Ceci ne put toutefois protéger l'œuvre des critiques, qui avaient de tout autres attentes d'un concerto solo. Hans von Bülow écrivit

par exemple : « Le concerto pour violon en Sol majeur de Max Bruch est pour le violon mais celui de Brahms est clairement *contre*. » Et selon les dire, le grand violoniste virtuose espagnol Pablo de Sarasate ne voulut pas mettre le concerto à son répertoire car il se refusait à écouter, son violon à la main, le solo de hautbois d'une beauté prodigieuse qui introduit la partie lente.

La relation entre Brahms et Joachim se rafraîchit sérieusement lorsqu'en 1880, durant le divorce de Joachim et de sa femme, la mezzo-soprano Amalie Schneeweiss, Brahms prit partie pour cette dernière. Clara Schumann rapporte que les deux amis refusèrent même de se parler pendant un certain nombre d'années, bien que Joachim ait continué à interpréter la musique de Brahms. Pour sortir de cette impasse, Brahms écrivit pendant l'été 1887 un double concerto pour violon, violoncelle et orchestre, duquel il espérait que Joachim jouerait la partition du violon. Ce fut en effet le cas et le 18 octobre de cette même année, la première de cette œuvre fut donnée à Cologne sous la direction de Brahms, avec Joseph Joachim au violon et Robert Hausmann au violoncelle. Joachim témoigna de la gratitude pour le geste de Brahms et les liens furent rétablis. Clara Schumann : « Ce concerto est pour ainsi dire une œuvre de réconciliation - Joachim et Brahms se parlent à nouveau pour la première fois depuis des années. »

Le double concerto contient de nombreuses références musicales à l'amitié entre Joachim et Brahms. Il renvoie par exemple plusieurs fois au concerto pour violon en la mineur de Giovanni Battista Viotti, l'une des œuvres préférées de Joachim, que Brahms adorait lui aussi. Mais il y a plus encore. Le matériel thématique du premier mouvement est basé sur le motif *f.a.e*. Lorsque les solistes attaquent avec un passage en forme de cadence sur le thème principal, c'est le violon solo qui ouvre la marche avec les notes *f.e.a* (une inversion que Joachim utilisait lui aussi bien souvent). Puis à la fin du premier mouvement, après plusieurs dialogues entre les instruments solo, vient un long passage dans lequel les deux solistes jouent en tierces : un symbole musical de l'amitié retrouvée ?

« Libre, mais seul », la devise de l'amitié entre Brahms et Joachim, deux

grands maîtres qui furent liés par leur approche capricieuse de la vie. Car comme Joachim qui, après l'échec de son mariage ne voulut plus jamais se lier à autre une femme, Brahms ne se maria jamais. Juste avant d'entamer son double concerto, il écrivit à son « amie de cœur » Clara Schumann : « J'ai besoin de solitude absolue, non seulement pour pouvoir offrir ce que j'ai de mieux, mais aussi et tout simplement pour suivre mes propres pensées. C'est dans ma nature. Par ailleurs toutefois, cela s'explique facilement : après tout, quelqu'un qui comme moi jouit de la vie et de l'art, est seulement trop pressé de jouir des deux – et d'oublier tout le reste. Peut-être est-ce également la façon la plus correcte et la plus raisonnable d'agir. Mais actuellement, avec une nouvelle grande œuvre sous les yeux, j'en suis toujours relativement satisfait et je dois me dire : je ne l'aurais pas écrite si j'avais joui de la vie avec exubérance le long du Rhin et à Berchtesgaden. »

*Ronald Vermeulen*

*Traduction française : Brigitte Zwerver-Berret*

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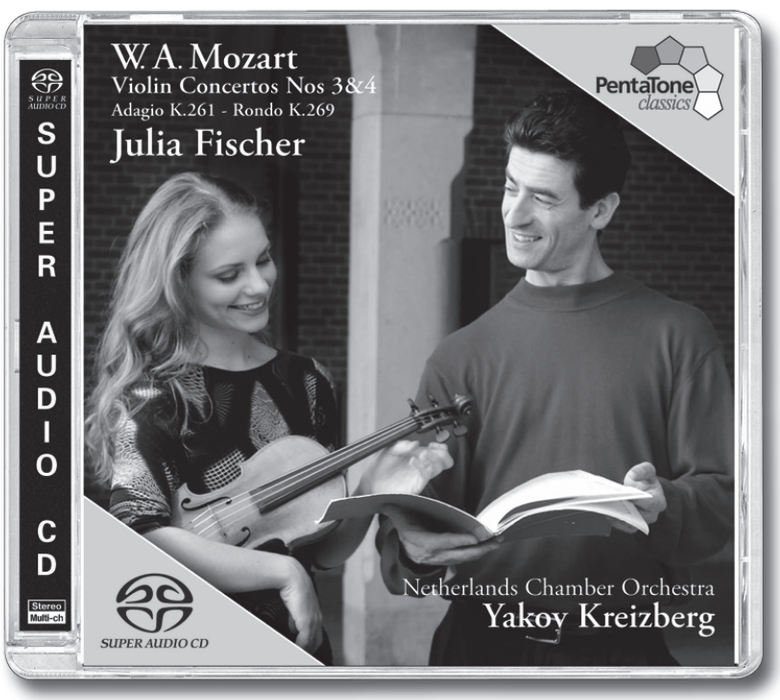


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