



VIEUXTEMPS
*Violin Concerto No. 4
in D Minor, Op. 31*

YEHUDI MENUHIN
PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA
WALTER SUSSKIND

"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"
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Vieuxtemps—CONCERTO IN D MINOR, Op. 31
(1828-1882)

22 1/2
MLP
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SIDE 1
First Movement—Andante
Second Movement—Allegro vivace
SIDE 2
First—Third Movement—
Scherzo and Trio
Last—Fourth Movement—
Finis (Allegro)

From nineteenth century Belgium, particularly the region around Liege, sprang a school of violins which has exercised a profound influence on the art of playing and on the music written for the violin. Louis Vieuxtemps was born at Vervins in 1828. Because that date and the death of Vieux in 1882, there seems close connection. Maxick, Mann and Chou Thomas may never have achieved the universally acknowledged position of Vieuxtemps and Ysaie, but their influence, particularly on their Belgian contemporaries, was not insignificant. Schuler comments that it would appear that a general love of string playing in the district and the influence of the large Conservatoire resulted in "a quite disproportionate number of the string players in the Paris orchestra being of Walloon birth and training" at the beginning of the 19th century.

Although the violin among the greats, and certainly one of the most famous, doubtless some of the realizations of Vieuxtemps' performance and composition in this, in part at least, by the stimulation of living and working during such a favorable epoch, and the healthy study engendered by competition with those who normally speaking approached him on an equal. His personal background, too, was not unimportant to the development of his genius.

Vieuxtemps' father, a retired officer, was an "exceptional" teacher and pianist. His first teacher, such as he, was his progress, appeared in public as the soloist in a performance of Bach's 5th Concerto at the age of six. A subsequent tour, in company with his father (we think, perhaps of Felix Weiser and both Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Beethoven) advanced him to the first, who advanced him to his pupil. The year 1840 saw the beginning of another tour—in company with his father—this time to various German and Austrian towns. Spring 1844 found him in London and he played at the Philharmonic.

Concert on June 2nd. His first engagements were played in Belgium in 1838 and in 1841 he visited Vienna. A year later he went to Warsaw. Doubtless this constant travelling affected his health, and during a period of convalescence he turned to composition. Vieuxtemps again visited London in 1845. Shortly after his marriage in 1846, he accepted an invitation to solo violinist to the Year and a professorship at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire.

In 1852 he relinquished these appointments and once again took up the arduous life of a virtuoso, composing whenever he could find time. The death of his father, and of his wife in 1860 affected him deeply. In 1873 he was appointed to the Brussels Conservatoire. A severe stroke in 1875 prevented his left hand, and playing was no longer possible. But the urge to travel still remained and he died at Manchester on August 16, 1882.

His personality in the realm of the virtuoso was only recognized and has remained undiminished. It is inevitable that his compositions should be influenced by a certain striving for effect for effect's sake, yet even so, few are devoid of real feeling.

The St. Anne Concerto, written in 1852,

begins with a long whose melodic intention, in which to hand the "major" rather than the material of change to come. It is not a regularly classical melodic introduction, it is a more subtle than previous strains. The solo violin enters with a rising cadence phrase and after appropriate upward sweeps in the orchestra, enters down to an acute tension in the dramatic impetuous passage based on the form in the introduction. A change of mood, from anxiety to a momentary placidity (the key changes to F major) is immediately succeeded by cadence-like passages culminating in a return to the basic key of D minor. A bold note on the horn (D) leads into the repetition of a slow movement, an abrupt return to the key of F. But, then Vieuxtemps indulges in his by an immense conceivable gift of melody and the movement is a highly wrought exposition of contrast between a slow-moving, lyrical theme and variations of rhythm and harmony.

With slight pause, the drama begins to die with a short melodic cadence phrase which permeates through the whole movement and is offset by a equally quiet one (more muted). The drama in the central and largest movement of the whole work.

The third movement begins with the personal, broad slow introduction, after 14 bars of which we enter the majestic finale in the key of D major. The soloist's characteristically vigorous entry reveals a long unbroken phrase, in which, in this case, we find the slow movement theme the theme here to be developed. Much use is made of the six repeated G's, the steady base which underlies the whole, and the horn and wood wind before the final orchestral flourish. The movement explains to the full the movement's possibilities, double and triple stopping played and cadence-like phrases give to the whole movement a quality and brilliancy that show much to show for the structural process, self-possessed. A GREAT MASTER.

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