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KULENKAMPFF & SOLTI *Brahms Violin Sonatas*

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Sonata No.1: The recording balances well the piano both aloft and slow. Perhaps its tone is a shade dry, but that presumably is the player's affair. I do not know either of the two at "first ear." The violin is always finely outlined, with a tense strength that for me is a shade restrained.

The first sonata did not come out until Brahms was well on in years (1878-9); it was the product of a happy summer holiday. The sensibility is sweet, tender, strong, yet never loudly outspoken. The players give us all the requisite strength, without very notable tenderness. It is a wee bit sober; but then, it can be argued, Brahms did not spill over. Yet he might have been treated a trifle more smilingly. In the development there is splendid partnership and aplomb. I think the violinist could make rather more of that opening phrase, which so pervades the work. He is very true and pure in tone, if not extremely warm. The playing is shapely, strong, and such as I think Brahms would have approved.

There is a phrase employment in the second movement (as the start was used, in the first); that opening rise and fall; we find it also in the finale. Here is an essence of Brahms's nobility. Throughout the work he sings gloriously. The agitation is almost confined to the first movement. The end of the slow one is exquisite; the pressures of the middle part soothed and endeared. Finale: The theme is derived from two songs, *Regenlied* and *Nachklang* (Nos. 3 and 4 of Op. 59), both of which begin alike, but continue differently, as do the attacks in the sonata. There is an obvious connection with the first theme of the first movement. Then, too he uses his slow movement theme in this one. The sonata gets its nickname, *Rain*, from the prevalence of this figure, and perhaps of the idea of gently pattering rain—not in a sorrowful sense, but as a mood and colour element, and to some extent a unifying one in the three-movement work. The work of the partners in this sonata is particularly apt, neat, gracious, without the least sentimentality: with perhaps, as I suggested, even a trace of dryness that does not at all connote dullness; rather it is the opposite of sweetness, as in wine. There is a curious little inward withdrawnness in the finale, I feel: very typical Brahms, musing happily, self-contained, always solitary, yet the philosopher who cannot demand love, only offer it sullenly.

A. R. - The Gramophone February 1948

Sonata No. 2: A very charming interpretation of a sonata which is predominantly lyrical and suffers a little from lack of contrast. The least successful movement is the middle one in which Brahms attempts to combine slow movement and scherzo and falls between two stools. Balance between the two instruments is good but there is a serious lack of the fundamental bass all the way through and, on my copies, rather too many clicks on sides 2, 4, and 5. I mention these not because they disturb me in the least but because I know such blemishes upset those who demand that schoolgirl complexion.

A. R. - The Gramophone March 1949

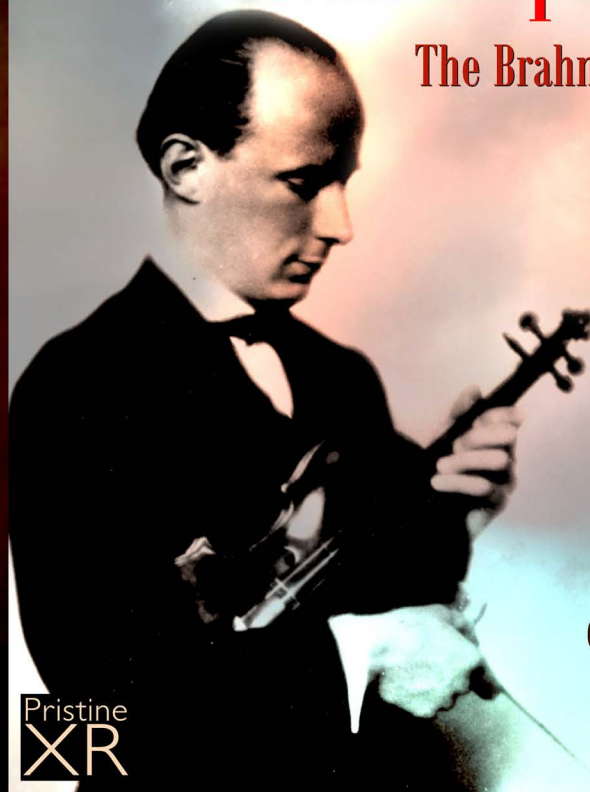
Producer's Note

These delightful sonatas combine Kulenkampff's last recordings before his unexpected and sudden death in 1948 at the age of 50 with Georg Solti's very first of a fifty year career. Here Solti's role is as piano accompanist, rather than the legendary conductor he would become, yet his innate musicality shines through. Kulenkampff, meanwhile, was one of Germany's finest violinists and would have expected many more years of a glittering career. They were recorded at the tail end of the 78rpm era, and whilst this XR remastering has brought out wonderful tone from both players, there were difficulties at times with surface noise, most particularly in the second sonata. By contrast much of the first and third sonatas proved clean and clear, and the sound quality in these is frequently astonishing.

Andrew Rose

Kulenkampff & Solti

The Brahms Violin Sonatas



Georg Kulenkampff, violin
Georg Solti, piano

Decca studio recordings, 1947-48

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BRAHMS *Violin Sonatas*



BRAHMS Violin Sonata No. 1 in G, Op. 78

- 1st mvmt. - Vivace, ma non troppo (10:22)
- 2nd mvmt. - Adagio (7:40)
- 3rd mvmt. - Allegro molto moderato (8:15)

Recorded 28 January 1947, Radio Studio, Zurich
Matrix nos. ARS.76-81
Issued as Decca 78s K.1705-07

BRAHMS Violin Sonata No. 2 in A, Op. 100

- 4 1st mvmt. - Allegro amabile (8:01)
- 5 2nd mvmt. - Andante tranquillo (5:54)
- 6 3rd mvmt. - Allegretto grazioso (quasi Andante) (5:33)

Recorded July 1948, Radio Studio, Zurich
Matrix nos. SAR.346-51
Issued as Decca 78s AK.2083-85

BRAHMS Violin Sonata No. 3 in D minor, Op. 108

- 7 1st mvmt. - **Allegro** (7:19)
- 8 2nd mvmt. - **Adagio** (4:40)
- 9 3rd mvmt. - **Un poco presto e con sentimento** (3:12)
- 10 4th mvmt. - **Presto agitato** (5:37)

Recorded July 1948, Radio Studio, Zurich
Matrix nos. SAR.362-67
Issued as Decca 78s K.2112-14

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph
of Georg Kulenkampff

Violin Sonata No. 1
Recording producer: Victor Olof
Recording Engineer: Rolf Liebermann

Violin Sonatas Nos. 2 & 3
Recording producer: Victor Olof
Recording Engineer: Kenneth Wilkinson

Total duration: 66:33

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Georg Kulenkampff *violin*

Georg Solti *piano*

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