



Adolf Busch

Compositions from Marlboro



Violinist Adolf Busch has 70 opus-numbered compositions to his credit, plus a host of works without opus-number. Although he always concentrated much more on performing in concert and had the feeling having to "steal the time for composing" from his practising time, his ambitions as a composer were not in the least negligible. His œuvre includes several symphonies, a Violin Concerto, a Piano Concerto and other orchestral works, organ and piano music as well as songs and several choral works (including his demanding setting of Psalm 6 for chorus and orchestra, Op. 70, which he completed just a few days before his death), but above all chamber music in a variety of instrumentations. Although he valued his compositions, he rarely performed them in concert himself. The occasion to hear compositions of Adolf Busch in concert eventually arose at the Marlboro Music School and Festival, where they have been performed regularly since the 1950s; some concerts have been recorded, and some have even been included in a series of records released by the Marlboro Recording Society.

The *Five Preludes and Fugues for String Quartet* and the *Divertimento for Thirteen Instruments* were both composed in the 1920s, and both works have been frequently performed at Marlboro. The *Divertimento* received its first performance by members of the Dresden State Opera Orchestra conducted by Fritz Busch, Adolf's brother. It is one of Busch's compositions which is somewhat less demanding for the listener, but requires interpretative precision and sprightly inspiration. The *Five Preludes and Fugues for String Quartet* (which were performed at Marlboro six times from 1958 through 2001) relate to the influence of both J. S. Bach and Max Reger, whom Busch had first met in 1909 and with whom he gave concerts regularly from 1910 until Reger's death in 1916.

The hitherto only performance of Busch's *Clarinet Sonata* at Marlboro took place in 1969. The work, written in the first half of 1939 (and refined until 1941) and inspired by Reginald Kell, with whom he had recorded Brahms's *Clarinet Quintet* in London in October 1937, may in part have been conceived alongside Reger's F# minor *Sonata for violin and piano*, Op. 84, a work that Busch had frequently performed with the composer and later with Serkin, two substantial movements flanking a witty and yet complex *scherzo*. The appealing *Variations for Piano Duet*, a Christmas present for his wife Frieda in 1944, were first performed at Marlboro in 1953, Peter Serkin partnering his father in two performances in 1961 and 1980.

It is fascinating here to delve into Busch's compositions - which have attracted steadily increasing interest over the past few decades.

Dr. Jürgen Schaarwächter

BuschBrothersArchive in the Max-Reger-Institut, Karlsruhe



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XR Remastered by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Adolf Busch

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Total duration: 78:28

BUSCH Divertimento for Thirteen Instruments, Op. 30

1. 1st mvt. - Alla marcia (1:35)
2. 2nd mvt. - Andante (3:12)
3. 3rd mvt. - Scherzo (4:34)
4. 4th mvt. - Presto (1:04)
5. 5th mvt. - Andante cantabile (3:11)
6. 6th mvt. - Allegro con spirito (5:15)

Odile Renault (flute), Rudolf Vrbsky (oboe), Cheryl Hill (clarinet), Stefanie Przybylska (bassoon), Robin Graham, Stewart Rose (horn), Henry Nowak (trumpet), Neil Grover (timpani), Isidore Cohen, Irene Serkin (violin), Caroline Levine (viola), Robie Brown Dan (violoncello), Carolyn Davies (double bass)
Marlboro College Persons Auditorium, 8 August 1982

7. BUSCH Theme and Variations in B-flat Major, Op. 63 (10:25)

Rudolf Serkin, Peter Serkin (piano)
Marlboro College Dining Hall, 6 August 1961

BUSCH Clarinet Sonata in A Major, Op. 54

8. 1st mvt. - Allegro ma non troppo (11:29)
9. 2nd mvt. - Scherzando vivace (3:25)
10. 3rd mvt. - Grave (12:17)

Harold Wright (clarinet), Rudolf Serkin (piano)
Marlboro College Persons Auditorium, 8 August 1969

BUSCH Five Preludes and Fugues for String Quartet, Op. 36

11. 1. Andante. Vivace (4:43)
12. 2. Adagio. Allegro energico e vivace (4:10)
13. 3. Lento. Lento espressivo (6:32)
14. 4. Molto vivace (Quasi presto). Scherzando, vivace non troppo (2:16)
15. 5. Vivace. Tempo di Gavotte (4:20)

Pina Carmirelli, Pasquale Pellegrino (violin), Fausto Anzelmo (viola), Francesco Strano (violoncello)
Marlboro College Persons Auditorium, 9 August 1974

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