

Robert Craft's recording of the Schoenberg *Violin Concerto*, with soloist Israel Baker and the CBC Symphony Orchestra, was made on Friday 20th April, 1962. Nine days later the same musicians performed the same work live in Toronto, and almost a week later the *Toronto Star* acknowledged the event:

"Tending to be overshadowed in the reactions to last Sunday's Stravinsky-Schoenberg concert here was the Schoenberg half of the evening. Those who missed the event will be able eventually to hear the three Schoenberg works in the Columbia recording made last Monday [sic] by the CBC Symphony orchestra under Robert Craft's direction...

...The other two Schoenberg works, however, struck me as deep and durable examples of his extraordinary' multi-layered style ... The Violin Concerto, with that incredible (and justly lauded, in the reviews) solo performance by Israel Baker, is less immediately grateful than the composer's Variations or Piano Concerto, but still manifestly the work of a grandly inventive musician. Its romantic urges, its affinities to Mahler and Debussy, become obvious in a clear live performance such as this.

To me the music is fascinating somewhat in the way of snowflakes, snail tracks, or complex larvae under a microscope. The finale, a Schoenbergian pantomimic mixture of march and gavotte, capped by an altogether remarkable cadenza, proves a dazzler in the writing, just as it was the other night in the playing. (At the same time, there's no doubt the first movement is too busily laid out for safe audibility of the soloist.)

The enthusiastic reception of these pieces should pave the way for the programming — soon — of Schoenberg's other major works, long overdue for presentation here, especially the Variations and the Opus 16 Orchestral Pieces." — John Beckwith, *The Toronto Star*, May 5, 1962

Whilst Robert Craft is best remembered for his association with Stravinsky, he was also very closely associated with the Second Viennese School composers, recording and performing music by Berg, Webern and, of course, Arnold Schoenberg. Indeed, it was Craft who effectively introduced their music to Stravinsky, who assiduously attended rehearsals for recordings such as those included here, and ultimately would introduce elements of their "serial" compositional process into his own works.

Craft twice recorded the complete orchestral works of Schoenberg — the three works presented here represent only the tip of the iceberg in that respect, and are among Craft's earliest. They offer three very different facets of the composer's work: the purely orchestral works which start and close the album contract the early, late-romantic Schoenberg of 1899's *Verklärte Nacht* with the atonal serialism of the 1926-28 *Variations for Orchestra*. Schoenberg's *Violin Concerto*, completed in 1936 brings another voice — that of the violin soloist — into the whole, requiring further modification of his technique, with a move away from strict serial form and the adoption of something vaguely closer to a quasi-tonal approach for the solo player.

All three works were excellently recorded in full stereo, and these stereo XR remasters aim to bring their sound palettes fully up to date in this, the composer's 150th anniversary year.

Andrew Rose



craft conducts schoenberg

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SCHOENBERG Variations for Orchestra, Op. 31*

1. Introduction. Mäßig - ruhig (1:19)
2. Thema. Molto moderato (0:55)
3. Variation I. Moderato (0:59)
4. Variation II. Langsam (1:30)
5. Variation III. Mäßig (0:46)
6. Variation IV. Walzertempo (1:08)
7. Variation V. Bewegt (1:48)
8. Variation VI. Andante (1:14)
9. Variation VII. Langsam (2:08)
10. Variation VIII. Sehr rasch (0:35)
11. Variation IX. L'istesso tempo - aber etwas langsamer (0:50)
12. Finale. Mäßig schnell (5:29)

SCHOENBERG Violin Concerto, Op. 36**

13. 1st mvt. - Poco allegro - Poco animato (11:14)
 14. 2nd mvt. - Andante grazioso - Poco più mosso (7:17)
 15. 3rd mvt. - Finale. Allegro (10:33)
- Israel Baker, violin

SCHOENBERG Verklärte Nacht, Op. 4**

16. Grave (5:37)
17. Molto rallentando (5:18)
18. Pesante (1:45)
19. Adagio (8:37)
20. Adagio (3:42)

*Columbia Symphony Orchestra

**CBC Symphony Orchestra

conducted by Robert Craft

XR remastering by: Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of Robert Craft

Variations for Orchestra
Recorded 4 June 1957
Hollywood, USA

Violin Concerto
Recorded 20 April 1962
Massey Hall, Toronto, Canada

Verklärte Nacht
Recorded 2 December 1962
Massey Hall, Toronto, Canada

Total duration: 72:45

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