

Of Related Interest on Music & Arts:

CD-1070(4)* **Walter Gieseck**: Unissued public performances and broadcasts, 1933-1947. BACH: *Partita 1* in Bb; *Partita 2* in c; *Partita 5* in G (1947); *English Suite 6* in d (1949); BEETHOVEN: *Sonata No. 14* in c# Op. 27 No. (1944); *Sonata No. 16* in G, Op. 31 No. 1 (1947); *Sonata No. 27* in e, Op. 90 (1943); SCHUBERT: *Rondo*, from *Sonata* in D, Op. 53 (1945); MENDELSSOHN: *Rondo capriccioso* in E (1947); *Hunting Song from Songs Without Words* in A, Op. 19, No. 3 (1947); *Song of the Pilgrim from Songs Without Words* in Bb, Op. 67, No. 3 (1947); *The Joyous Peasant from Songs Without Words* in A, Op. 10, No. 5 (1947); SCHUMANN: *Sonata* in f# Op. 11 (1943); *XII Symphonic Etudes* Op. 13 (1945); BRAHMS: *Intermezzo* in C (1933); *Intermezzo* in A (1933); *Romanze* in F (1933); DEBUSSY: *La soirée dans Grenade* from *Estampes*, *Mouvement de Habanera* (1947); *Hommage a Rameau* from *Images I* (1947); *Mouvement* from *Images I* (1947); *La Cathédrale engloutie* (1947); *Feux d'Artifice* (1947); Scriabin: *Sonata No. 3* in f# minor Op. 23 (1945); *Sonata No. 5* in F#, Op. 53 (1947); *Sonata No. 9* in F major Op. 68 (1947); RAVEL: *La vallée des cloches* (1947); *Alborada del gracioso* (1947); *Ondine* (1947). (A co-production with Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv).

CD-1071(2)* **Wilhelm Kempff**: Rare Recordings (1936-1945) from the Collections of German Radio Archives. MOZART: *Piano Concerto No. 21* in C, K.467. Großes Leipziger Sinfonie-Orchester, cond. Hans Weisbach (3 April 1939, RRG); BEETHOVEN: *Piano concerto No. 5* in Eb Major, Op. 73. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, cond. Peter Raabe (1936; from DG 78s) Rundfunk (Hamburg); BACH: *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in d minor* (10.10.1945); BACH: from *Cantata No. 147*. Wohl mir daß ich Jesum habe, arr. for piano by Kempff; CHOPIN: *Berceuse*, Op. 57 (10.10.45); *Mazurka in f minor*, Op. 7 No. 3 (18.8.45); *Mazurka in C major*, Op. 57 No. 2 (18.8.45); *Fantasia Impromptu in c# minor*, Op. 66 (10.10.45); LISZT: *Au lac de Wallenstadt* from *Première année de Années de Pèlerinage* (18.8.45); *Eglogue* from *Première année de Années de Pèlerinage* (18.8.45); *Au bord d'une source* from *Première année de Années de Pèlerinage* (3:43) (18.8.45); *Il Penseroso* from *Seconde année de Années de Pèlerinage* (18.8.45); *Sonetto 123 del Petrarca* from *Seconde année de Années de Pèlerinage* (18.8.45); *Gondoliera* from *Venezia e Napoli* of *Années de Pèlerinage* (10.10.45); FAURE: *Nocturne No. 6*, Op. 63 (10.10.45). (A co-production with Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv and Norddeutscher).

CD-1080(6)* **Edwin Fischer**: Concert Performances and Broadcasts, 1943-53. BRAHMS: *Variations on an Original Theme*, Op. 21, No. 1 (1949). BEETHOVEN: *Fantasy*, Op. 77 (23 Nov. 1952); BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concerto No. 1* in C, Op. 15, Edwin Fischer/Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (7 or 8 Mar. 1943). MOZART: *Fantasy in C minor*, KV 475; *Romance in A flat*, KV Anh. 205 (29 May 1941). BRAHMS: *Piano Concerto No. 2* in B flat, Op. 83. Basel Orchestra/Hans Münch (16 Feb. 1943); BACH: *Clavier Concerto No. 2* in E, BWV 1053. Edwin Fischer/Lausanne Chamber Orchestra (10 Oct. 1945). *Concerto in D minor for 3 Claviers*, BWV 1063. Paul Baumgartner, Adrian Aeschbacher, Edwin Fischer/Lausanne Chamber Orchestra (10 Oct. 1945) BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concerto No. 4* in G, Op. 58. Anatole Fistoulari/Paris Conservatory Orchestra (23 Jan. 1949); BACH: *Concerto in A minor for Flute, Violin, and Clavier*, BWV 1044. Edmond de Francesco (flute), Giovanni Bagarotti (violin) Edwin Fischer/Lausanne Chamber Orchestra (10 Oct. 1945). MOZART: *Quintet in E flat for Piano and Winds*, KV 452. Wilhelm Meyer (oboe), Paul Blöcher (clarinet), Gerhard Burdach (horn), Josef Zutter (bassoon) (1943). BRAHMS: *Piano Sonata No. 3* in F minor, Op. 5. RAI, (14 Sep. 1948); BACH: *Clavier Concerto No. 4* in A, BWV 1055; *Musical Offering*, BWV 1079-Ricercare a 6 (arr. Fischer). Wassenauer, arr. Franko: *Concerto Armonico in F minor* (formerly attributed to Pergolesi). Edwin Fischer/Lausanne Chamber Orchestra (25 Oct. 1948); BACH: *Concerto No. 5* in F minor, BWV 1056. Edwin Fischer/Lausanne Chamber Orchestra (25 Oct. 1948). MOZART: *Piano Concerto No. 20* in D minor, KV 466; *Symphony No. 40* in G minor, KV 550. Edwin Fischer/Orchestre Municipal de Strasbourg (11 Jun. 1953) (60:33). Presented with the kind cooperation of the Edwin Fischer Archive (Vienna), and released by permission of EMI.

CD-1158(1)* **Claudio Arrau** Plays Chopin: Two Historic Public Performance Recordings. CHOPIN: *Concerto No. 1* in e, Op. 11 (1830) with WDR S.O., Cologne, cond. Otto Klemperer (25 Oct. 1954); *Concerto No. 2* in f, Op. 21 (1830) with Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, cond. Fritz Busch (U.N. Human Rights Day Concert, New York, 10 Dec. 1950).

CD-1163 [AAD]

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Ferruccio Busoni

Piano Concerto, op. 39

GUNNAR JOHANSEN, PIANO

NDR ORCHESTRA (HAMBURG)

HANS SCHMIDT-ISSERSTEDT,
CONDUCTOR



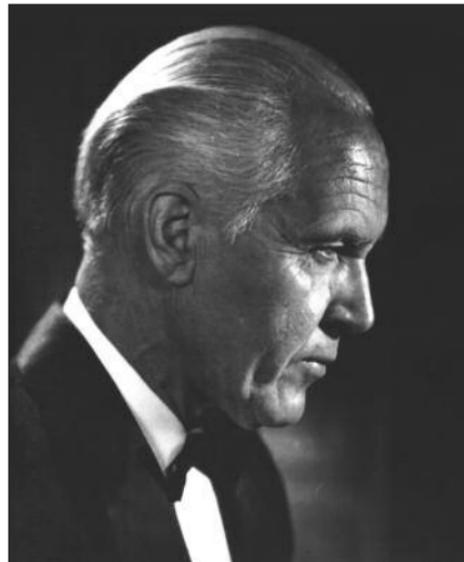
Ferruccio Busoni [1866-1924]

*Concerto für Klavier und Orchester
mit Männerchor/for Piano and Orchestra
with Men's Chorus op. 39 (Kindermann 247)*

I Prologo e Introito. Allegro, dolce e solenne	14:55
II Pezzo giocoso. Vivacamente, ma senza fretta	9:20
III Pezzo serioso:	21:20
1. Introductio (Andante sostenuto, pensoso)	
2. Prima Pars (Andante, quasi adagio)	
3. A Rera Pars (Sommessamente)	
4. Ultima Pars (a tempo)	
IV All' Italiana (Tarantella) Vivace; in un tempo	12:00
V Cantico. Largamente	10:00
Total Time: 68:25	

*Gunnar Johansen, Klavier/Piano
Männerchor des Norddeutschen Rundfunks/Men's choir of the NDR
Einstudierung/Preparation by Otto Franze; NDR-Sinfonieorchester/NDR Symphony
Orchestra, Ltg.; Conducted by Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt*

*Aufgenommen/Recorded 15./16. Januar 1956, Hamburg, Musikhalle (live);
Tonmeister/Chief producer: Dr. Friedrich Schnapp*



Johansen's realization of this score in this recording of Busoni's extraordinary masterpiece. Petri commented in his program notes that Busoni intended to realize a "... sound which would be capable of reproducing every dark and mystic emotion of the human heart ...". Johansen and Schmidt-Isserstedt are surely attuned to those complicated passions in this concert. In their heartfelt performance, each of those dark and mystic emotions vibrate their part in Busoni's grand and vast sonic landscape.

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PARK RIDGE, ILLINOIS

¹ Decades later Schnapp (1900-1983), who was a lifelong Busoni scholar and, like Johansen, a student of Petri, arranged, in his capacity as "Tonmeister" or music supervisor at Hamburg's radio station NDR, for two invitations to Johansen to perform the monumental Piano Concerto there, first in 1949, and again in 1956, both times with Schmidt-Isserstedt. The latter performance, given twice and recorded both times, was edited under Schnapp's supervision, to yield the source tape for the present CD.

intent, it requires of the pianist virtuosity and stamina of the highest order, yet also sensitive, even intimate, collaboration with the orchestra. In this recorded performance, listeners will hear both Johansen's transcendental virtuosity as well as his poetic sensitivity. He throws off the Lisztian bravura passages of the earthy second movement (*Pezzo giocoso*), and during the climax of the third movement (*Pezzo serioso*), with a confident, seemingly effortless, brilliance. Yet note also his tender bell-toned duet-like passages with solo oboe and flute towards the end of the opening movement (*Prologo e introito*), and with English horn near the opening of the fifth (*Cantico*). Johansen's rhythmic drive in the spirited fourth movement, a *tarantella*, lends a diabolic air to this unusual movement. In this well-proportioned performance that above all respects Busoni's large-scale architecture; Johansen and Schmidt-Isserstedt comfortably assume the new sort of aesthetic relationship that Busoni intended for orchestra and soloist.

Of a Johansen recital, Glenn Dillard Gunn wrote in the Washington, D.C. *Herald Times*, "Last night the horizons of pianistic art were advanced by Gunnar Johansen. He is a poet and painter—poet, when he endows his percussive instrument with songful melody; painter when he evokes all its wealth of overtones to create an acoustic perspective not limited by three dimensions. This surely is the piano playing of the future." For us fortunate listeners, the future mentioned by Dr. Gunn is now: we can hear the virtuosity, color, and sensitivity of



Friedrich Schnapp with Furtwängler, 1947.



WHEN Egon Petri wrote a letter of recommendation on behalf of Gunnar Johansen to Dimitri Mitropoulos, then director of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, he was unstinting in his praise of Johansen: "He [Johansen] has been my pupil when he was sixteen years of age and I always have considered him the most talented of all my students. He is a real artist and our relationship is (*mutatis mutandis*) the same as mine was with Busoni." Petri's strong endorsement of Johansen is significant, given Petri's reputation as the brightest of the many performing stars who gathered around Busoni in Berlin during the early 20th century. He was Busoni's foremost disciple.

Busoni's stature in Berlin during the first decades of the twentieth century was of the highest. Johansen often recalled that people commonly referred to this colossus in music as "*der* Busoni, as though he were an institution". Like Liszt, Busoni championed the most gifted of his contemporaries: Stravinsky, Bartok, Nielsen, Faure, etc. As with Liszt, it would be hard to find anyone of artistic merit of his time whom he had not met and known.

Petri noted in his endorsement to Mitropoulos that "Johansen loves the [Busoni Concerto] and I can assure you that nobody else nowadays could play it better than he." Thus Petri's enthusiasm is both generally for Johansen, and specifically for his ability to perform Busoni's unique and massive Piano Concerto, presented here in this live 1956 recording

of a performance in Hamburg with Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt conducting the orchestra and male chorus of the Northwest German Radio. This recording therefore documents the musical thoughts of an artist, Johansen, who stood firmly in direct relationship to Busoni.

The passing of a mantle of great importance can thus be inferred from Petri's evaluation of Johansen. The musical family in which Petri grew up in Dresden numbered Busoni and Brahms amongst its distinguished friends. Busoni's *Concerto for Violin* is in fact dedicated to Petri's father, the violinist Henri Petri. Egon Petri had himself appeared as soloist in the English premiere of the Piano Concerto in October of 1909, with Busoni conducting, at the Festival of Newcastle. The high esteem in which Busoni long held Petri is further documented by their joint appearances in numerous concerts and recitals, and their close collaboration on Busoni's editions of the works of J.S. Bach. (Busoni had also hoped to collaborate on a new edition of Mozart's piano concertos with Petri, but died before work could begin).

At the time the teen-aged Johansen arrived in Berlin for study in 1920, Busoni no longer taught piano, and often referred young pianists to Petri, then on the faculty of the famous *Hochschule für Musik*. Some years after Busoni's death, Johansen asked the composer's widow, Gerda, why he did not teach piano in the twenties. "He was jealous of his time, and wanted it for composition," she explained. So Johansen, who had briefly studied with Edwin Fischer and Liszt pupil, Frederic Lamond, began with Petri fruitful studies that were to last several years.

Johansen did however meet personally with the great genius several weeks before Busoni's death. Petri had told Busoni of his prodigious Danish student, and Busoni had endorsed Petri's recommendation that the gifted young pianist give the Berlin premiere of Busoni's revised edition of his *Ten Variations on a Prelude of Chopin*. After the performance, which the composer could not attend owing to illness, Johansen met with Busoni. Busoni had told a member of his inner circle, Friedrich Schnapp¹, to prepare Johansen for the fact that he (Busoni) "looked like Don Quixote in the Fourth Act." At their meeting Johansen and Busoni discussed musical matters. Johansen later recalled how Busoni asserted that nothing much could come of improvisation. While Johansen, who subsequently improvised and recorded 549 of his own sonatas (collectively entitled "Improvised Tapestries") did not ultimately agree, he recognized that Busoni's views were always logically formed. Johansen



*Raise to the eternal power your hearts,
Feel Allab near, gaze upon His deeds!
Totally alive is therefore the dead world.
Extolling the deity, silent is the poem!*

(Translation by John S. Sweeney III, Dec. 2004)

Commenting on the structure and style of his concerto, Busoni wrote in his program notes for the premiere, "the pianoforte of today is more powerful and richer in color than that of our forefathers, owing both to its construction and to the way in which it is played. It is now able both to do battle with the untamed orchestra and also to unite with it and give it a colour of its own." Busoni wrote further of his dissatisfaction with the traditional concerto form, describing it as a "caricature of a symphony." The orchestra was typically "too timid" and the soloists "too aggressive," he declared controversially. Only the genius of Beethoven, Brahms, and Liszt, he allowed, enabled them to transcend what Busoni saw as inherent limitations in the concerto form to create works of beauty. In his 1909 program notes Egon Petri wrote, "...neither listeners nor would-be performers can hope to form a just opinion of this work unless they detach themselves from all prejudicial tradition." On another occasion Petri reflected, "Busoni wanted to write a concerto to end all concerti ... and, you know, he almost succeeded!"

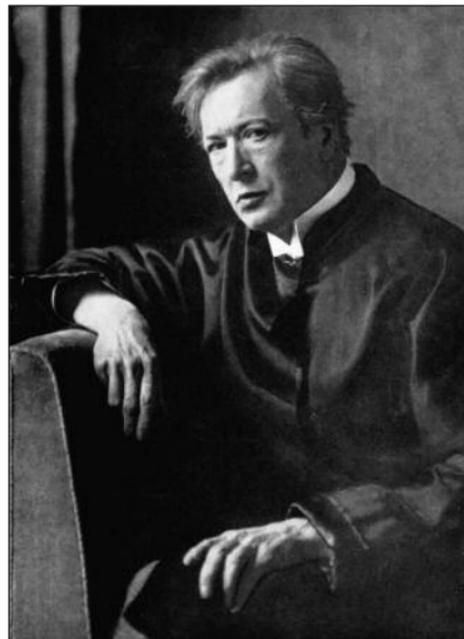
Thus Busoni's *Piano Concerto* is a concerto of a different sort: symphonic in scale and

Symphony, or Mahler's towering *Second Symphony*, also in five movements. Busoni explains the chorus in the final movement: ". . . the music has taken us through so manifold a variety of human feelings that the words of a poet are necessary to sum them up in conclusion." The English translation of the poem reads:



Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt (Courtesy of Decca)

*Raise to the eternal power your hearts,
Feel Allah near, gaze upon His deeds!
Alternate in earth's illumination joys and pains,
Calmly stand the pillars of the world.
Thousands and thousands and still more thousands
Of years so serenely as now in the power,
Shine forth clearly with radiance and firmness;
The indestructability is brought to expression.
Hearts were brought to passion, hearts grow cold,
Playing interchangeably love and death.
But in restful anticipation they stretch forward,
Splendid and powerfully early as well as late.*



all. Thus," Johansen summarized with a twinkle in his eye, "our way of playing is as objective as one can subjectively be!"

Like his mentors, Busoni and Petri, Johansen was a composer, thinker, and performer of staggering accomplishments. Blessed with the ability to learn complicated and lengthy musical scores and to apprehend the composers' intentions nearly instantaneously, Johansen performed and recorded the larger part of the solo piano repertoire, much of it during his long tenure at the University of Wisconsin. He joined the faculty there in 1939 as the first ever Artist-in-Residence for music studies in the United States. In the 1940s his public performances and radio broadcasts at the university included the Beethoven, Schubert, and

reflected later, "Busoni thought that since so much written music was of little value, how could unplanned improvisations produce anything? I would say, at the very least, that this points out his strong feeling for structure in music, for the architecture of a piece."

As an artistic heir of Busoni and Petri, Johansen commented (in an interview with me) that, "[Petri] was an absolute and positive reflection of Busoni, of his manner of playing the piano, as well as of his aesthetic sense of how music flows. The Busoni school strove for a direct transmission of the musical sentence. There is objectivity in our way of playing. Yet, of course one can not be perfectly objective so I would say, in other words, that it is a *natural* way of playing . . . there is no great lingering over notes and hesitations before important notes; extreme *rubato* was not used at

Mozart sonata cycles, and complete works of Chopin. Between 1934 and 1939 he also performed on numerous occasions in Europe and the United States—notably at Columbia University and the University of Chicago—an historical recital series modeled on those of the 19th century pianist, Anton Rubinstein. These twelve recitals, played by Johansen from memory, presented a broad view of the piano repertoire, extending from the pre-Baroque era to well into the 20th century. He later recorded the entire series.

As were most prominent musicians of the 19th and early 20th century, Johansen was not only a virtuoso, but a composer, too. His compositional styles reveal that he was, like Busoni, visionary and innovative, yet respectful of the musical past. In addition to his recorded works of improvisation, the prolific Johansen composed hundreds of works for solo piano, three piano concertos, and choral and chamber works. Among these, his major compositions are the “Pearl Harbor” sonata, the “Goethe Sonata”, the “Toccata in the Phrygian Mode”, the “East-West Cantata,” and the “Third Piano Concerto.”

Fortunately for posterity, Johansen took great interest in the improved audio recording technology that emerged in the late 1940s, and proceeded over the next several decades to record over 150 long-playing albums. These included the complete solo works of Franz Liszt and J.S. Bach, as well as the mature works of Busoni (who had stated that his true first opus was his *Violin Sonata #2, Opus 36a*). Of Johansen’s monumental series of Liszt recordings, Keith Fagan of the Liszt Society of London, England, wrote: “However often Liszt’s music may be recorded, Johansen’s series will always be of inestimable value and is destined, I am sure, to become one of the great classics in the history of recording, for his performances, while they may very well be challenged on record by others of similar outstanding merit, are never likely to be surpassed.” Johansen’s solo recordings are still available on the Artist Direct label, P. O. Box 100, Blue Mounds, WI 53517, USA.

In addition to his musical activities, Johansen took a lively interest in the world in general, and relished his participation in the life of a vibrant university community in Wisconsin. The broad-minded and learned Johansen lived during the academic year in a secluded woodsy area near Madison, and had a special passion for matters ecological, specifically energy conservation. He was particularly interested in fuel-efficient cars—only now, in the early 21st century, becoming a reality on the roads. Johansen and his wife, Lorraine, also



owned a ranch in rural northern California where they resided during the summer. At their haven there, precious to both of them, Johansen convened another of his creations, the Leonardo Academy, a gathering of prominent figures from different fields of study, including both the sciences and the humanities, who hoped collectively and synergistically to devote their “candle power”—as Johansen called it—to the solution of world problems.

Regarding his great *Piano Concerto, Opus 39*, (he often referred to it as his “skyscraper” concerto), Busoni composed the longer first, third and fifth movements first. The essential meaning of the concerto will be found in the architectural triad formed by these movements. These lengthy movements are grand in scale, at times somber in tone, at other times joyous. They represent a wide spectrum of

human emotion. In the lively and earthy second and fourth movements, Busoni gives vent to the contrasting Italian side of his character, liberally using folk song and rhythm from his native land. Some have supposed that he was deliberately trying to jolt the German critics who reigned supreme in his time.

Busoni felt the unusual fifth movement, in which the male chorus sings, to be “indispensable [to] complete the circle through which we have traveled. [It] joins the end to the beginning.” The inclusion of a passage (a “Hymn to Allah”) from *Aladdin*, an epic poem by the Danish poet, Adam Gottlob Oehlenschläger (1779–1850), sung in German by the male chorus, is remarkable. Possible precedents for this are few: Beethoven’s *Choral Fantasy* and *Ninth*