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Albert
DIETRICH
(1829–1908)

Symphony in D minor • Violin Concerto
Overture in C major

Klaidi Sahatçi, Violin
Solistes Européens, Luxembourg
Christoph König



Albert Dietrich (1829–1908)
Overture in C major, Op. 35 • Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 30
Symphony in D minor, Op. 20

It is through his association with the Schumanns, Brahms and the violinist Joseph Joachim that German composer and conductor Albert Hermann Dietrich is best known. In 1851, he began studying with Robert Schumann, who two years later introduced him to Brahms. Dietrich became part of the circle surrounding the Schumanns, and was among the chief mourners at Robert's funeral in 1856. From 1861 to 1890, Dietrich was director of music at the small grand-ducal court of Oldenburg, and through his musician friends he completely transformed its musical life: Clara Schumann, Joachim, Brahms and their colleagues performed regularly at recitals and concerts, and helped Dietrich to provide his orchestra with new works by the leading composers of the day. He himself also wrote music for them, including a symphony, concertos, chamber music, works for piano, choral, operatic and vocal music. He eventually retired from Oldenburg for health reasons, finally settling in Berlin, where he died in November 1908. His music was largely neglected until 2008, when the Oldenburg Orchestra recorded his symphony and the concertos for the centenary of their former music director.

The *Overture in C major, op. 35* was composed during the Oldenburg years; it was first published in Leipzig, in 1882, by J. Rieter-Biedermann.

Dietrich's *Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 30* was initially composed with Joachim in mind but Dietrich finally dedicated the work 'To his friend Johann Lauterbach', who gave the first performance in 1874; it was published the same year by Hugo Pohle of Hamburg. While not being the equal of Brahms' *Violin Concerto*, the work's originality and variety of orchestral colour are impressive enough to have earned it a place in the concert repertory.

The *Symphony in D minor, Op. 20* was first performed in Leipzig with the Gewandhaus Orchestra conducted by one of Dietrich's former teachers, Julius Rietz. Reviews were mixed. The English *Musical World* of 18 March 1871, for instance, writes of a performance in 'Frankfurt-on-the-Maine': 'The symphony affords abundant proof that its composer thoroughly understands all the mechanical details of his art, but is deficient in imagination and feeling'. Despite this somewhat unfair judgment, the work was one of the most often-played new symphonies of its day.

The symphony's kinship with Brahms is evident, as is its origin in Romanticism, with the horn repeatedly evoking the 'Waldeinsamkeit' ('forest solitude'), so characteristic of the movement.

Ariel Wagner

Albert Dietrich (1829–1908)

Ouvertüre C-Dur op. 35 · Violinkonzert d-Moll op. 30 · Sinfonie d-Moll op. 20

Der in Meißen bei Dresden geborene Albert Hermann Dietrich studierte in jungen Jahren an der Kreuzschule in Dresden und nahm später, gleichzeitig zu einem Philosophiestudium, Privatunterricht bei Ignaz Moscheles, Julius Rietz und Moritz Hauptmann. Im Jahre 1851 siedelte er nach Düsseldorf über, wurde dort Kompositionsschüler von Robert Schumann und gehörte sehr bald zum engen Freundeskreis um Clara Schumann, Johannes Brahms und dem Geiger Joseph Joachim.

Wie einige gegenseitige Widmungen zeigen, müssen Schumann und Dietrich sich wohl sehr geschätzt haben: so widmete Dietrich seinem Mentor und Lehrer z.B. sein Klaviertrio C-Dur op. 9, und eine knappe Woche vor Schumanns Selbstmordversuch, widmete dieser seinem Schüler die Sammlung seiner "Märchenerzählungen" op.132.

Ab 1855 war Albert Dietrich Städtischer Musikdirektor in Bonn und wirkte anschließend, ab 1861 bis 1890 als Hofkapellmeister am Oldenburgischen Nationaltheater. Nicht nur, dass Dietrich ein außergewöhnlicher Dirigent für das Orchester dieser Stadt war, aber er machte Oldenburg, Dank seiner engen Beziehungen zum sogenannten "Schumannkreis", auch zu einer regelrechten Pflegestätte der Schumannschen und Brahms'schen Musik, indem er Johannes Brahms, Clara Schumann und Joseph Joachim regelmäßig zu Konzerten nach Oldenburg einlud.

Obschon der Name des Komponisten leider bis heute hauptsächlich nur als eine Art "Fußnote der Musikgeschichte" für seine Komposition des Kopfsatzes in der "F-A-E" Violinsonate – einer Gemeinschaftskomposition mit Schumann und Brahms zu Ehren des Geigers Joachim -

aus dem Jahre 1853 auftaucht, komponierte Dietrich außer eines bedeutenden Chorwerkes, einigen Opern und Klavierwerken, viele hervorragende Lieder und ein hoch interessantes Kammermusikwerk. Darüber hinaus hatte er auch eine überaus glückliche Hand für Orchestermusik und schrieb außer einer Reihe von Konzerten, auch eine Symphonie, welche er seinem Freund Johannes Brahms widmete, und im Jahre 1882 dann, schrieb er die C-Dur Ouvertüre op. 35.

Auch wenn Dietrichs Violinkonzert nicht ganz mit dem von Johannes Brahms, welches dieser fünf Jahre vorher komponiert hatte, mithalten kann, so braucht es sich aber in puncto Melodienvielfältigkeit, Originalität und geigerischer Finesse nicht unbedingt hinter einem Violinkonzert, wie dem von Max Bruch z.B., zu verstecken.

So schreibt z.B. ein gewisser Felix Meritis im Kultur-Forum "Capriccio" folgendes über Dietrichs d-moll Symphonie op.20 aus dem Jahre 1869:

«Dietrichs d-moll Symphonie op. 20 sehe ich als ganz großen Wurf in der Interregnumszeit zwischen Schumanns und Brahmsens Symphonien an. Es ist nicht schwer herauszuhören, dass der erste Satz dieser Symphonie Brahms in den Ohren klang, als dieser seine c-moll Symphonie schrieb. Dieses Werk würde ich als sehr bedeutend einschätzen, deutlich bedeutender als die - an sich guten - Symphonien eines Niels Gades oder eines Carl Reineckes.»

Georges Backes

Albert Dietrich (1829–1908)

Ouverture en do majeur, op. 35 • Concerto pour violon et orchestre en ré mineur Symphonie en ré mineur

Chef d'orchestre et compositeur, Albert Hermann Dietrich nous intéresse aujourd'hui parce qu'il est comme une sorte de trait d'union entre son maître, Robert Schumann, et son ami, Johannes Brahms. Il s'agit même d'une bande d'amis puisqu'on peut y ajouter Clara Schumann et le violoniste Joseph Joachim. Très présent auprès de Brahms, Dietrich lui a même consacré un livre : « Souvenirs de Brahms », qui est une source biographique de première importance.

Ses œuvres : une symphonie, un opéra : « Robin Hood », des concertos pour violon, violoncelle et cor, de la musique de chambre, des Lieder.

Avec Schumann et Brahms, il a été un des auteurs de la fameuse sonate pour violon et piano « F.A.E ». Il s'agit des lettres initiales de la devise de leur ami violoniste Joachim, à qui la sonate était destinée : « Frei aber Einsam – Libre mais Seul ». Une œuvre en quatre mouvements, utilisant au maximum les notes en intitulé allemand F (fa), A (la) et E (mi). Dietrich composa l'Allegro initial, Schumann l'Intermezzo et le Finale, Brahms le Scherzo. L'Ouverture en do majeur, op. 35, a été composée pendant les années Oldenburg ; elle a été publiée pour la première fois à Leipzig, en 1882, par J. Rieter-Biedermann.

Ce concerto pour violon et orchestre en ré mineur est peu connu et interprété. Il est dédié à l'ami Joseph Joachim. Selon le violoniste Klaidi Sahatci, c'est une œuvre dont la beauté d'apparence dissimule bien les redoutables

difficultés techniques. Ainsi, petit exemple, elle multiplie les octaves, ce qui crée une impression d'éclatement et de pathos.

Son premier mouvement, *Allegro*, est plutôt héroïque. Le second, *Allegro espressivo*, est très beau et effectivement très expressif, manifestement influencé d'ailleurs par l'ami Brahms. En un mot, charmant. Quant au troisième, *Allegro molto vivace*, il se caractérise par sa fraîcheur, sa délicatesse.

La Symphonie en ré mineur a été créée à Leipzig, avec l'orchestre du Gewandhaus, sous la direction de Julius Rietz, l'un des anciens professeurs de Dietrich. Les critiques sont mitigées. Le "Musical World" anglais du 18 mars 1871, par exemple, écrit à propos d'une exécution à "Francfort-sur-le-Main" : "La symphonie prouve abondamment que son compositeur comprend parfaitement tous les détails mécaniques de son art, mais qu'il manque d'imagination et de sentiment". Malgré ce jugement quelque peu injuste, l'œuvre a été l'une des nouvelles symphonies les plus jouées de son époque.

La parenté de la symphonie avec Brahms est évidente, de même que son origine romantique, le cor évoquant à plusieurs reprises la "Waldeinsamkeit" (solitude dans la forêt), si caractéristique du mouvement.

Stéphane Gilbert



Photo © Christof Wagner

Christoph König

Christoph König has been principal conductor and music director of the Solistes Européens, Luxembourg since 2010. Celebrated for his clarity, precision and elegant approach, König is in high demand as a guest conductor all over the world. He has served as principal conductor of the Malmö Symphony Orchestra and the Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Música and principal guest conductor of the Orquesta Filarmonica de Gran Canaria. König has also been affiliated with many of the leading opera houses of the world. As of 2022/23, he is the artistic director and chief conductor of the RTVE Symphony Orchestra, Spain. His extensive discography includes releases on Hyperion, Chandos and SEL Classics, and he enjoys close collaborations with the Rubicon Classics and Naxos labels. His recordings of Brahms' piano concertos with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra were praised in *BBC Music Magazine*. König was born in Dresden where he sang in the Dresdner Kreuzchor. He studied at the Hochschule für Musik Dresden and furthered his studies in masterclasses with Sergiu Celibidache and Sir Colin Davis, whose assistant he later became with the Sächsische Staatskapelle at the Semperoper Dresden. www.christophkoenigconductor.com

Klaidi Sahatçi

Klaidi Sahatçi is appreciated for his beautiful and rich sound, and elegant and expressive playing. He studied in Albania and at the Conservatorio di Musica 'Giuseppe Verdi' in Milan, and with Salvatore Accardo and Boris Garlitsky. Sahatçi has served as first concertmaster of the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Orchestre National de Lyon, Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala of Milan and Solistes Européens, Luxembourg. He has performed as a soloist with orchestras across Europe, and is also a passionate chamber musician. Since 2012 Sahatçi has been a professor at the University of Music of the Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana, and has given several masterclasses. He plays a 1719 Antonio Stradivarius 'ex Wieniawski' violin, via Mercedes-Benz Zurich. www.klaidisahatci.com



Photo © Priska Ketterer

Solistes Européens, Luxembourg

The Solistes Européens, Luxembourg (SEL) is made up of musicians from some of the finest orchestras in Europe. Since its first concert on 22 September 1989, these musicians have met regularly in Luxembourg for rehearsals, concerts, and recordings. Another distinctive feature of the SEL is the originality of its programming. Christoph König, music director and principal conductor, succeeds in bringing together major works of the classical repertoire with unfamiliar or unknown works in the same programme, creating surprising and thought-provoking connections. Eager to promote the upcoming generation of musicians, each season the SEL includes concerts showcasing promising young talents from both Luxembourg and abroad, most notably at its Camerata (chamber music) cycle at the Philharmonie. The orchestra also reaches out to new audiences by organising concerts in schools and public venues. In addition, through the initiative of the Luxembourg Ministry of Culture, it commissions a new work each year from a resident composer. To date, the SEL has produced over 130 albums for the Sony Classical, Chandos, Naxos and Rubicon Classics labels, among others. For the last 35 years, the SEL has figured among the major players in the musical life of Luxembourg. Its activities are supported by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and the City of Luxembourg Fund as well as numerous patrons. The orchestra of the SEL is a non-profit-making organisation, officially recognised since 2005 as an association in the public interest. For this reason, all donations made to the SEL are tax-deductible within the limits set by tax law. The orchestra is under the Patronage of His Royal Highness the Grand Duke. www.sel.lu



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Albert Hermann Dietrich is best known through his association with the Schumanns and his friendship with Brahms, but as this recording shows, his contribution to this circle's artistic activities went further than promoting their works as music director at the small grand-ducal court of Oldenburg. The *Symphony in D minor* has a strong kinship with Brahms and was one of the most frequently performed new symphonies of its day, while the originality and variety of orchestral colour in the *Violin Concerto* are impressive enough to have earned it a place in the concert repertory.



SOLISTES
EUROPÉENS
LUXEMBOURG
EUROPEAN ORCHESTRA

Albert
DIETRICH
(1829–1908)



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| 1 | Overture in C major, Op. 35 (pub. 1882) | 8:14 |
| | Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 30 (pub. 1874) | 31:45 |
| 2 | I. Allegro | 14:05 |
| 3 | II. Adagio ma non troppo | 8:52 |
| 4 | III. Finale: Allegro molto vivace | 8:41 |
| | Symphony in D minor, Op. 20 (1869) | 42:29 |
| 5 | I. Allegro | 13:12 |
| 6 | II. Andante con molto di moto, quasi Allegretto | 9:07 |
| 7 | III. Scherzo: Allegro energico – Trio I–II | 9:43 |
| 8 | IV. Finale: Allegro | 10:16 |

Klaidi Sahatçi, Violin [2]–[4]
Solistes Européens, Luxembourg
Christoph König



LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère de la Culture



LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère de l'Éducation nationale,
de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse

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Publishers: J. Rieter-Biedermann [1], Hugo Pohle [2]–[4], Edition Stringendo: Edition – Wolfgang Jacob [5]–[8]
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