

Johannes Brahms - Violin Concerto (Julia Fischer) [2007]

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1 I. *Allegro non troppo* 24:21 2 II. *Adagio* 10:22 3 III. *Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace - Poco piu presto* 8:11 Julia Fischer - violin Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra Yakov Kreizberg - conductor

In the Violin Concerto, Fischer takes an expansive view of the first movement, freely varying the tempo as she did in her outstanding version of the Tchaikovsky Concerto (4/07). The 23-minute timing even underestimates her spaciousness, as she uses an unidentified cadenza rather shorter than the usual Joachim one (the booklet incorrectly says it's the Joachim).

Shaham and Kremer offer tauter and brisker accounts of the first movement but Fischer amply justifies her spacious and flexible speeds in the feeling of spontaneity. Her performance never feels self-conscious or too studied and her range of tone and dynamic is extreme, bringing pianissimi of breathtaking delicacy. Thomas Zehetmair with the Northern Sinfonia present the work on a chamber scale – a performance I find exceptionally magnetic – and also take a tauter view. Fischer's slow movement, too, is expansive while in the finale she lets the tempo relax just enough to allow a persuasive spring in the rhythms, bringing out the Hungarian dance flavour. --- Edward Greenfield, Gramophone [8/2007]

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