



LUCERNE FESTIVAL

audite

HISTORIC  
PERFORMANCES

# Wolfgang Schneiderhan

Mozart Violin Concerto, K. 219

Henze Violin Concerto No. 1

Martin Magnificat

Irmgard Seefried

Swiss Festival Orchestra

Paul Hindemith | Ferdinand Leitner | Bernard Haitink

Wolfgang Amadé Mozart (1756–1791)

**Violin Concerto in A major, K. 219**

I. *Allegro aperto – Adagio – Allegro aperto* 9:52

II. *Adagio* 10:09

III. *Rondeau. Tempo di Menuetto – Allegro – Tempo di Menuetto* 8:50

Lucerne, Kunsthaus, 13 August 1952

Hans Werner Henze (1926–2012)

**Violin Concerto No. 1**

I. *Largamente, rubato – Allegro molto* 8:27

II. *Vivacissimo – Alla marcia* 2:21

III. *Andante con moto* 7:20

IV. *Allegro molto vivace* 6:37

Lucerne, Kunsthaus, 26 August 1964

By courtesy of SCHOTT MUSIC, Mainz

Frank Martin (1890–1974)

**Magnificat (1967 version)** 11:26

Lucerne, Kunsthaus, 14 August 1968 (world premiere)

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By courtesy of SCHOTT MUSIC, Mainz

Wolfgang Schneiderhan violin

Irmgard Seefried soprano (Martin)

Swiss Festival Orchestra

Paul Hindemith (Mozart) | Ferdinand Leitner (Henze) |

Bernard Haitink (Martin)

recorded live at LUCERNE FESTIVAL (Internationale Musikfestwochen Luzern)

Previously unreleased





**“Essential listening”  
Wolfgang Schneiderhan in Lucerne**

“When an artist of the musical and technical prowess of Wolfgang Schneiderhan champions a masterpiece, one may look forward to a rare musical treat. And that is indeed how it turned out. The Violin Concerto in A major by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (K. 219) saw a performance which will remain unforgettable. What sonic noblesse, musical sophistication, what a consummate sense of style, what technical brilliance and elegance! This was essential listening, and one is all the richer for that enormously lifting experience.” This was the enthusiastic response from the Lucerne newspaper *Vaterland* on 16 August 1952 to a concert that the violinist Wolfgang Schneiderhan had given three days previously at the Internationale Musikfestwochen, today’s LUCERNE FESTIVAL. By now, the Austrian musician was no longer a stranger at Lucerne – this was his fifth performance at the festival. However, not only did he play a major role in Lucerne over decades, but he was also a defining figure in the violin world of the twentieth century.

Born in Vienna on 28 May 1915, Wolfgang Eduard Schneiderhan gained early recognition as a *Wunderkind*. From 1922 until 1928 he studied in Písek with Otakar Ševčík, the founder of the Czech-Viennese violin school; in 1925 he also trained with Julius Winkler in his home city. In 1933, at the tender age of eighteen, he became concert master of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, and in 1937 he was offered the same post by the Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera. In the following autumn, he also became concert master of the Vienna Philharmonic – as successor to the Argentinian-born violinist Ricardo Odnoposoff (1914–2004) who had emigrated to the USA following Austria’s annexation to Hitler’s Germany; after the war he returned to Vienna where he would live for the rest of his life, working as a renowned teacher.

There has been occasional, but inconclusive, speculation about Schneiderhan’s “role” during the Third Reich, inasmuch as such a role even existed. His elevated position saved him from being conscripted during the Second World War – similarly as with the young Transylvanian violinist Gerhard Taschner, whose life was probably saved by the fact that Wilhelm Furtwängler appointed him concert master of the Berlin Philharmonic. In 1938 Schneiderhan, alongside Otto Strasser, Ernst Morawec and Richard Krotschak, founded a string quartet named after him which existed until 1951 and also appeared in Lucerne in 1949, Schneiderhan’s debut year at the festival which marked the beginning of a close relationship lasting several decades: until 1985 he appeared nearly every year, and, succeeding Georg Kulenkampff, also directed the masterclasses. He remained a member of the Vienna Philharmonic until 1950, when he decided to turn towards his solo career.

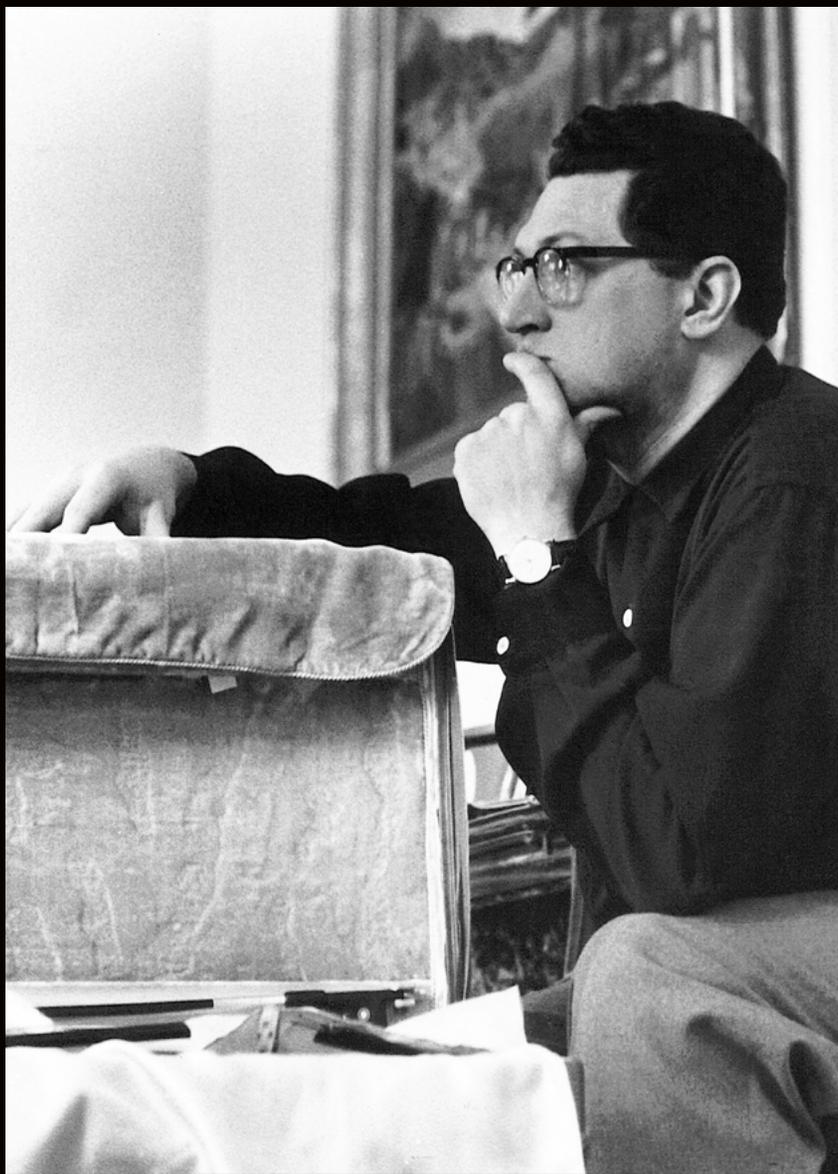


At the same time, Schneiderhan continued to play and perform chamber music with much enthusiasm, for instance (once again succeeding Kulenkampff) as part of a trio alongside Edwin Fischer and Enrico Mainardi, with whom he appeared regularly in Lucerne during the 1950s. In addition, he taught at the Vienna Musikhochschule and at the Salzburg Mozarteum. In 1948 he married the soprano Irmgard Seefried with whom he also occasionally appeared: the two artists managed to inspire composers such as Rolf Liebermann, Hans Werner Henze and Frank Martin to write in a new, original genre: several duets for soprano, violin and orchestra were composed specially for the couple, including Martin's *Magnificat*, recorded here, which would later be expanded. On 18 May 2002, Wolfgang Schneiderhan died, highly honoured, in his home city of Vienna.

Schneiderhan displayed an enormous technical prowess even in his youth – he could effortlessly master all challenges in the various scores. Nonetheless, he never entered the territory of pure virtuoso concertos or sensational solo pieces: showing off technical tricks was not his style. His dexterity always underpinned a well-articulated tone, a cultivated breath of modulation and a highly differentiated dynamic palette; the natural and genuine nature of his playing was, justifiably, praised again and again. Schneiderhan's "house gods" were Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, but he also continually explored those composers of the twentieth century that seemed interesting to him: he became a knowledgeable and committed champion of the works of Boris Blacher, Karl Amadeus Hartmann, Hans Werner Henze, Igor Stravinsky, Rolf Liebermann and Frank Martin. Despite keeping his distance from virtuoso showmanship, he was by no means a classical purist: he also played romantic concertos and chamber music, in keeping with a *bon mot* of the contemporary Munich music critic Albrecht Roeseler who said that violinists who did not care for the violin repertoire of the nineteenth century had better pack up their instruments ...

It is impossible to imagine the history of the festival at Lucerne without Wolfgang Schneiderhan. At his first appearance in summer 1949 he presented himself not only as a soloist in the Brahms Double Concerto under Furtwängler (with Enrico Mainardi playing the solo cello part) but also, as mentioned above, with the Schneiderhan Quartet. At his final appearance, a matinee in honour of Edwin Fischer's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in August 1986, he also presented chamber music, performing Schubert's Piano Trio in E-flat major, D. 929, alongside Boris Pergamenschikow and Paul Badura-Skoda. During these almost four decades he gave amazing forty-two concerts performing works by Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms, but also Alban Berg's *Chamber Concerto* and violin concertos by Martin, Stravinsky and Henze, appearing as part of a trio or a duo (for instance with Carl Seemann).

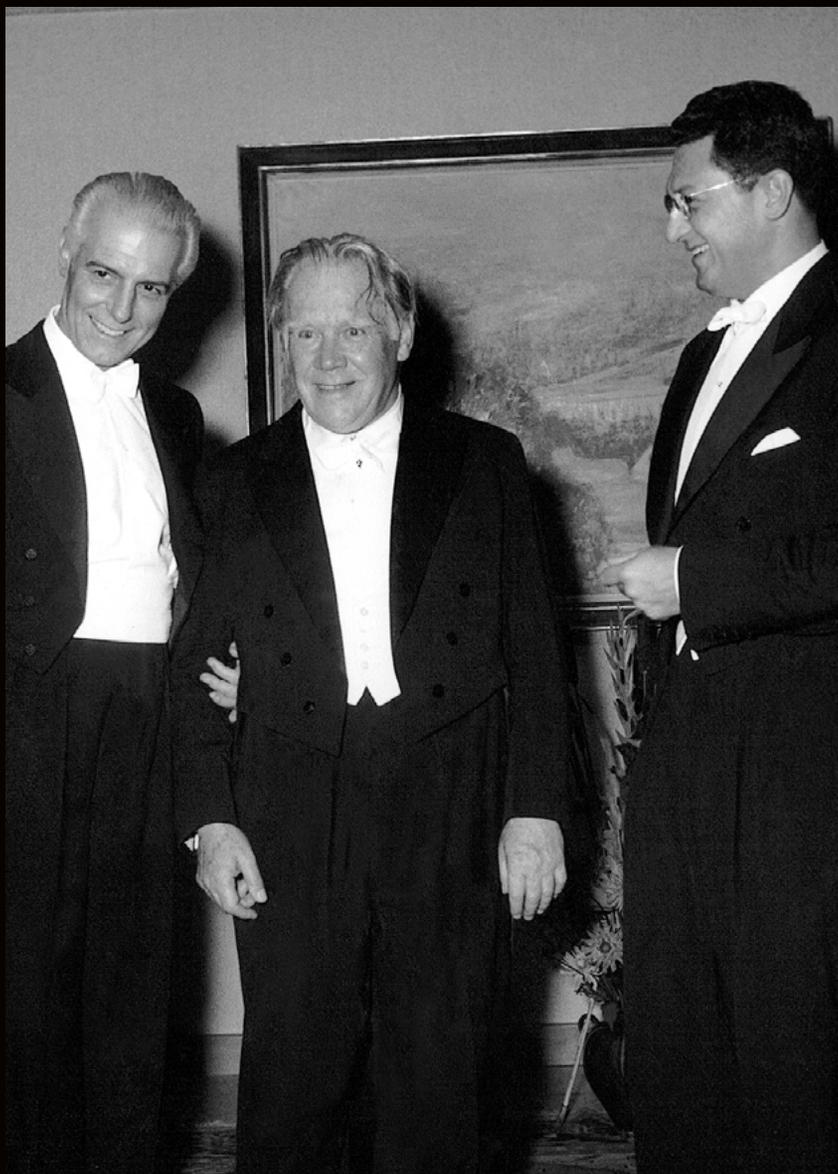
But not only his performances and his dedication at the masterclasses will be remembered: no less significant and pioneering was the foundation of a chamber orchestra



which Schneiderhan and his former student Rudolf Baumgartner brought into being in summer 1956 – the Festival Strings Lucerne. The English name was not an Anglophile fashion statement but intended to emphasise the international character of the ensemble from the outset: it was composed of a number of Schneiderhan's students as well as musician friends from various international orchestras. The ensemble's premiere – forming part of the festival, of course – made a splendid impression. At this occasion, the Festival Strings played an all-baroque programme, but thereafter went on continually expanding their repertoire, placing special emphasis on contemporary works, illustrated by the festival's "musica nova" series from 1959.

From the stock of Schneiderhan's Lucerne live recordings, this CD presents three examples which not only show him to be a proponent of the Viennese Mozart tradition, but also as an advocate for the music of his time. The first recording was made in the summer of 1952 and is Schneiderhan's earliest surviving recording from the festival: alongside Beethoven's *Prometheus Overture* and Bruckner's *Fifth Symphony* the programme included Mozart's *A major Violin Concerto, K. 219*. The Swiss Festival Orchestra, which was assembled anew each year on an ad-hoc basis, was directed by Paul Hindemith who had replaced an indisposed Wilhelm Furtwängler at short notice – and can thus be experienced as a conductor of classical repertoire. (Hindemith had conducted a concert of the Festival Orchestra as early as 1947, performing works by Bach and Mozart as well as his own *Symphony Mathis der Maler*).

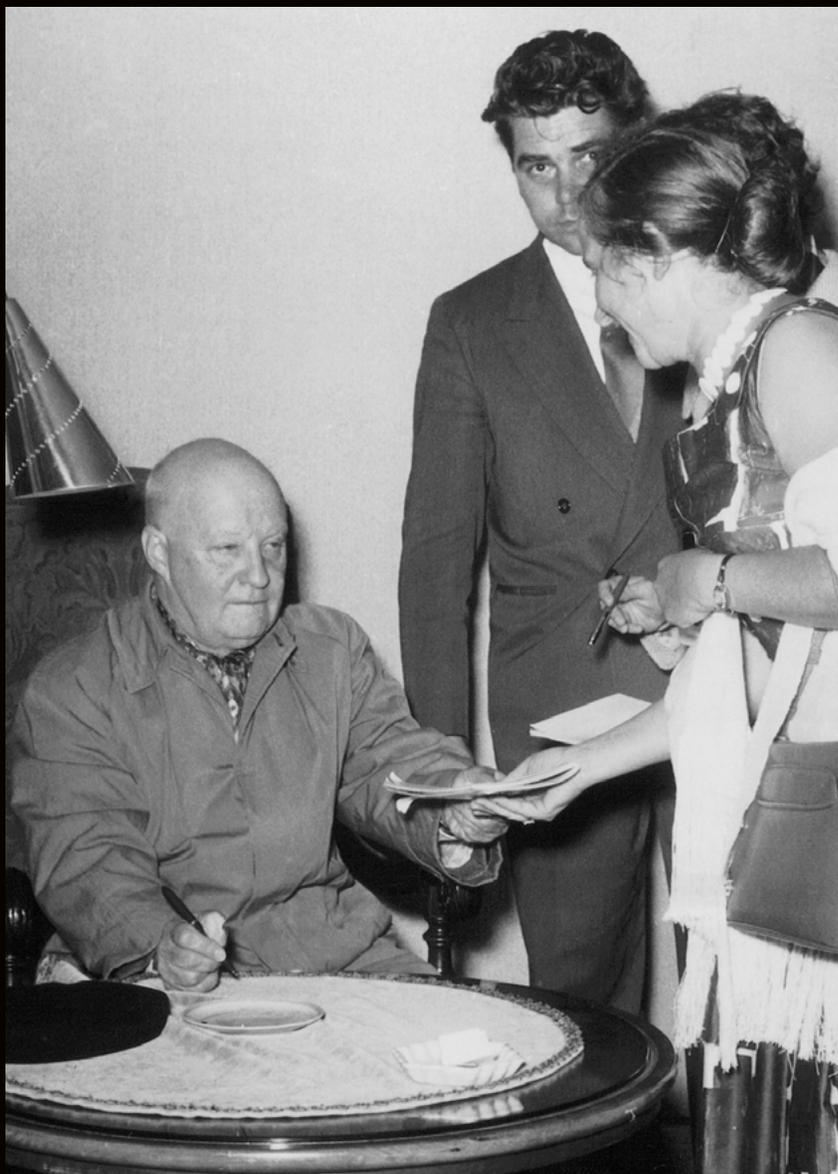
For Mozart, 1775 had been the year of the violin concerto, as it were: his *A major concerto* was written in December, following three other works of the same genre that he had composed during the previous months. It represents a perfect combination of the sunny, serenade-like tone with the elaborate symphonic structure, whilst also offering several special features. In the opening movement, in between the orchestral exposition and the solo exposition, Mozart inserts a slow interlude which seems to open the curtain: formally speaking, a highly unusual move. The "Adagio" inimitably unites ardent expression with well-considered formal design; the finale, on the other hand, is a rondo in leisurely minuet triple time. Here, however, the composer was clearly feeling mischievous: the fast "Allegro" central section in *A minor* catches us unawares and transports us into an exotic soundworld. Mozart was wise enough to avoid a specific instruction – popular attributes at the time included "alla turca" (in the Turkish manner), "all'ungherese" (in the Hungarian manner) and "alla zingarese" (in the Gypsy manner); however, these were used more or less synonymously. The origin of the respective passages can only rarely be identified exactly – perhaps it is their very indeterminableness which gives this episode its particular, sparkling appeal.



The second item on this disc was recorded twelve years later, on 26 August 1964, when Schneiderhan presented Hans Werner Henze's First Violin Concerto to the festival's audience. He later went on to record the work on disc with the Symphony Orchestra of the Bavarian Radio under the baton of the composer. Ferdinand Leitner, the General Music Director of the Stuttgart State Opera and from 1969 at the Zurich Opera House, conducts the Swiss Festival Orchestra. Henze composed the first of his three violin concertos in 1947, aged twenty-one, whilst still taking composition lessons from Wolfgang Fortner. Although the soloist plays a twelve-tone row at the beginning of the piece, Henze was not familiar with dodecaphonic structural principles at that time. Clearly neoclassical in structure and style, this is his first work for large-scale orchestra, which nonetheless reveals a sense of familiarity with this apparatus, as well as Henze's original invention. According to the composer himself, "widely curved, tender cantilenas" and a "full, wild harmonious sound" dominate, even where the "old forms" can only be sensed from a distance.

The predominantly lyrical and expressive opening movement is followed by a miniature scherzo with a *perpetuum mobile* character and *alla marcia* theme, an "Andante" with a tripartite form, as well as a predominantly motoric finale. Henze demands a lot of technical refinement from the soloist which, however, poses no audible problem to Schneiderhan: "The performance [...] was the admirable achievement of a musician of outstanding technique who subtly shaped the substance of the work, bestowing magic and sound on even the most recalcitrant detail", according to the music critic of *Vaterland* on 27 August, who also praised the conductor for having "considered everything". The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, describing the work as "one of the most significant concertos of our time", summed up: "The commanding mastery and artistic affinity with which Wolfgang Schneiderhan presented the supremely difficult solo part and his exemplary interaction with the [...] orchestra was on a par with the compelling compositional structure."

A notable archive discovery is the world premiere of Frank Martin's *Magnificat* for soprano, violin and orchestra. Schneiderhan unveiled it together with Irmgard Seefried at the opening concert of the 1968 festival – the work is also dedicated to the pair. On this occasion, the Swiss Festival Orchestra is conducted by Bernard Haitink, with whom Schneiderhan had already worked two years previously – at Haitink's Lucerne debut – performing Martin's Violin Concerto: a piece with which he felt a particular affinity (he made a wonderful recording of it with Ernest Ansermet and the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande in 1952). Not unlike the Violin Concerto, Martin's *Magnificat* combines harmonic austerity and sound magic; the declamatory style of the soprano is joined by a nobly restrained violin part. The Swiss composer told the *Luzerner Neueste Nachrichten* about the



work's genesis: "Twelve years ago, Irmgard Seefried and Wolfgang Schneiderhan asked me for a composition for violin and soprano. The challenge was to combine the text of the solo voice with the violin, creating a homogenous texture. Unfortunately, for many years I did not have enough time to delve into this project. Initially, I was going to compose a *Stabat mater*. But in spring 1967 the basic idea for the *Magnificat* came."

The *Luzerner Tagblatt* reported about the premiere that "all involved – the two soloists, Wolfgang Schneiderhan and Irmgard Seefried, leading the way – completely put themselves at the service of this *Magnificat* and were imbued with dedication for their task. The audience were generous with their applause." After some minor revisions, Martin integrated the eleven-minute work into his *Maria-Triptychon* as its second movement which the dedicatees premiered one year later in Rotterdam. In Lucerne, Schneiderhan did not present this extended version until the summer of 1984, this time together with the soprano Edith Mathis.

Hartmut Lück

Translation: Viola Scheffel

#### LUCERNE FESTIVAL Historic Performances

In cooperation with audite, LUCERNE FESTIVAL is presenting outstanding concert recordings of the work of artists who have shaped the Festival throughout its history. The aim of this CD edition is to retrieve treasures – for the most part previously unreleased – from the first six decades of the Festival, which was founded in 1938 with a special gala concert led by Arturo Toscanini. These recordings come from the archives of Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen (SRF), which, from the outset, has regularly broadcast the performances from Lucerne. Carefully remastered and supplemented with materials and photos from the LUCERNE FESTIVAL archive, they represent a history of the Festival in sound.

*Thank you for your interest in this audite recording.*

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## LUCERNE FESTIVAL

recording: live recording at LUCERNE FESTIVAL (Internationale Musikfestwochen Luzern)



In Zusammenarbeit mit Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen SRF

recording date: August 13, 1952 (Mozart) | August 26, 1964 (Henze) | August 14, 1968 (Martin)

recording location: Kunsthaus, Lucerne

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The historical publications at audite are based, without exception, on the original tapes from broadcasting archives. In general these are the original analogue tapes, which attain an astonishingly high quality, even measured by today's standards, with their tape speed of up to 76 cm/sec. The remastering – professionally competent and sensitively applied – also uncovers previously hidden details of the interpretations. Thus, a sound of superior quality results. Publications based on private recordings from broadcasts cannot be compared with these.

photos: cover: Wolfgang Schneiderhan © IMAGNO/Votava  
 © Archive LUCERNE FESTIVAL: p. 2: Ferdinand Leitner and Wolfgang Schneiderhan rehearse with the Swiss Festival Orchestra, Lucerne 1964 / J. Koch |  
 p. 3: Irmgard Seefried (giving an autograph) and Wolfgang Schneiderhan, Lucerne |  
 p. 4: Wolfgang Schneiderhan with his Festival Strings, Lucerne 1959 / Paul Weber |  
 p. 5: Wolfgang Schneiderhan / Max A. Wyss | p. 6: Enrico Mainardi, Edwin Fischer and Wolfgang Schneiderhan in Lucerne / Jean Schneider | p. 7: Paul Hindemith gives autographs, Lucerne, 1952 / Hans Blättler | p. 8: Ferdinand Leitner and Wolfgang Schneiderhan after their performance in Lucerne, 1964 / Paul Weber

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