

FORGOTTEN ARTISTS
An occasional series by Christopher Howell
23. CARL MELLES (1926-2004)

I have written extensively about Vladimir Delman, conductor of the Milan RAI (Italian Radio) Symphony Orchestra from 1989 till its disbandment in 1994. But what about Carl Melles, conductor of this orchestra from 1983 to 1988? I might ask myself first of all, since I was living in Milan through those years, but I never actually attended a concert conducted by him. Nor do I remember hearing any broadcast concert conducted by him. This is odd, since I listened to the radio fairly regularly during the entire period. I find it hard to believe I really never heard a single one of Melles' concerts – I did pick up, and record, a few rebroadcasts during the 1990s. But perhaps it is not so surprising. As we shall see, Melles seems to have had a notable ability to appear in quite important venues – Berlin, Vienna, Salzburg, Munich, Paris, Bayreuth – without anyone really noticing.

Thanks to some assiduous googling, I have pieced together a fairly full account of Melles' career. As ever, I am grateful to all those who so unstintingly make this sort of information available. I am grateful, too, to those who have put a few Melles recordings and broadcasts on YouTube or on their personal blogs. These have helped me fill out the few off-air recordings of my own.



Early years in Hungary

When Melles died, the Vienna newspaper *Der Standard* described him as “one of the last representatives of the old Austrian music tradition”¹. The name itself sounds as pure-bred Austrian as that of Karl Böhm, and Melles' repertoire became almost obsessively centred around the Austro-German classics. And yet Carl Melles was born Károly Melles in Budapest on 15 July 1926. His surname, I have it on the authority of a native Hungarian, was originally pronounced “Mellash”, though it became softened to a more Germanic form without need to alter the spelling.

Of Melles' family and childhood, nothing has emerged. I note in passing that, in 1937, the concertmaster of the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra² was one Carl Melles. It is tempting to suppose this might have been the father of “our” Carl Melles, or at least a relative. Perhaps some reader can confirm or deny this.

The obituary in *Der Standard* tells us that Melles studied at the Budapest Franz Liszt Academy from 1946 to 1949. We are not told what his instrument was. It seems likely that he was a pianist. Two of his programmes with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra name a piano concerto – Beethoven's 4th on 6-8 March 1968 and Mozart's K.491 on 8-11 October 1968 – but not a pianist. This may be a simple clerical error, but two such on what seems a carefully prepared site (see Appendix 1) points to the probability that Melles played them himself³.

¹ *Der Standard*, 7 May 2004

² Ilona von Dohnanyi ed. James A. Grymes: *Ernst von Dohnanyi, A Song of Life*, Indiana University Press, 2002.

³ The programme for 2-5 & 7 December 1976 lists Bartók's 2 portraits without naming the violin soloist. Here, though, the default assumption would seem to be that the orchestra's concertmaster played them.

From the biography in a programme Melles conducted in Paris in 1966⁴, we learn that his conducting teacher at the Budapest Academy was János Ferencsik, and that he also had private lessons with Otto Klemperer. Klemperer was conductor of Budapest Opera from 1947 to 1950.

By his mid-twenties, Melles was well established as a conductor in Hungary. He was conductor of the Hungarian State Orchestra from 1952 to 1957 and also chief conductor in Miskolc. In or around 1954 he was awarded the Franz Liszt Prize for a performance of Kodály's "Psalmus Hungaricus" he conducted in honour of the composer's 70th birthday⁵. He became a teacher at the Budapest Academy immediately upon leaving it as a student, and from 1954 to 1957 he was full professor there, presumably of conducting. He had also married – I do not have the date – an actress, Judith Rohonczy (1929-2001). Also known as Judit von Rohonczy, she had aristocratic lineage. Full steam ahead, seemingly, musically and personally. Then came the Hungarian uprising and the brutal Soviet response in November 1956.

Before moving on to the next phase of Melles' career, a few traces of his work in Hungary can be found. The most attractive of these is probably the recording, published in 1956⁶, of **Beethoven's Romances for violin and orchestra, opp. 40 and 50**, in which Melles conducts the Hungarian Radio Symphony orchestra and is joined by **Dénes Kovács** (violin).

In the 1960s, Qualiton (predecessor of Hungaroton) made a drive to establish a mid-price label in the UK that might stand on equal footing with the Czech Supraphon. On the whole, they did not catch collectors' imaginations in the same way, but the violinist Dénes Kovács acquired a certain cult status, not least for his recording of the Beethoven Concerto. His pure tone and natural phrasing are in evidence here, too. Furthermore, Kovács and Melles do not make the mistake of attempting to find a spirituality in these innocent early pieces equivalent to the late string quartets. Their graceful, flowing but never superficial interpretations show this music at its best.

Ferencz Szabo, whose **Lyric Suite** Melles recorded in Hungary, has already made an appearance in this series, in the article dedicated to Luigi Toffolo. For readers' convenience, I repeat my general introduction to the composer.

Szabo (1902-1969), a pupil of Kodaly and Weiner, was a lifelong Communist. Already in the 1920s, he was conducting workers' choirs and the like. Hungary in the 1930s was no place for a man with his beliefs and in 1932 he was compelled to move to Moscow. There he developed a line in simple, folk-based compositions suitably attuned to Soviet realism. Hungary, of course, went communist after the Second World War and Szabo returned home. He took up various administrative posts, becoming director of the Budapest Academy in 1958. He retired in 1967, but accounts vary over what actually happened. According to the English and French Wikipedia entry, it emerged that he had provided Stalin's secret police with information on his colleagues during the 1930s, leading to the deaths of several of them in the subsequent purges. When this became known, 30 years later, he was stripped of all official appointments and died in isolation. The Hungarian and Czech Wikipedia entries, insofar as I can understand them through an internet translation, know nothing of all this. Their story is that Szabo, a die-hard Stalinist to the end, gave

⁴See searchable database: <http://www.tce-archives.fr/document/4419-orchestre-de-parissociete-des-concerts-du-conservatoireherbert-von-karajankarl-mellesarthur-rubinstein>

⁵ Various sources, including the International Who's Who of 2004, refer to this Franz Liszt prize, but only the Russian Wikipedia entry links it to Kodály's 70th birthday which was, however, in 1952. The prize is not to be confused with the celebrated Franz Liszt International Piano Competition, which was not held between 1937 and 1956.

⁶ Gray's catalogue, viewable online at http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/discography/search/search_simple, lists only op. 50 and dates it 25 February 1956.

preference to ideological programmes as opposed to artistic ones, bringing the Academy into disrepute. He was therefore eased out.

It must be said that, human nature being what it is, it is not unlikely that Szabo ingratiated himself to the Soviet authorities by doing the dirty on ex-comrades back in Hungary. On the other hand, the proof of this can only be in the archives of Stalin's secret police, and the only body that could have released such information in the 1960s was Brezhnev's secret police. Moreover, the only body that could have made such information public in Hungary in the 1960s was Kadar's communist party apparatus. The "evidence", therefore, filtered through a supply chain of three institutions that should be distrusted on principle. Assuming that the English and French Wikipedia writers are correct in stating that such accusations were made, the more likely explanation is that the presence in a top academic post of a diehard Stalinist, in a communist empire that revolved around Brezhnev, was an embarrassment. In the best traditions of the totalitarian state, therefore, any old lie – or "post-truth" as they say today – would do to get rid of him.

Szabo's public disgrace does not seem to have done his reputation any lasting harm in his homeland. Several of his works are currently available from Hungaroton, including a more recent version of the Lyric Suite, which Melles recorded with the strings of the Hungarian Radio orchestra on 19 January 1953 (LPX 103)⁷. It must be said that this relatively early work, written in 1936 during Szabo's sojourn in the USSR, is much more attractive, even substantial, than the "Ludas Matyi" suite of 1950 that Toffolo set down. It has a bittersweet melancholy that even the busy finale does not entirely dispel, and which may cause British listeners to think of a figure like Finzi. Certainly, the prospect that Szabo's manuscript sketches mingled with notelets bearing the names of fellow-countrymen who were to be sped to their deaths, robs it of some of its appeal. But in truth, we do not really know this, nor do we know how Finzi, who not long after was busy destroying evidence of his Jewish ancestry in preparation for a likely Nazi takeover of the UK, would have acted had he been Hungarian rather than English. Nor do we know, indeed, what any of us might have done in such a tight corner. Separating the Lyric Suite from its circumstances, it is an attractive addition to the string repertoire, and is nicely shaded by Melles and the orchestra.

Less attractive, is a recording of **Liszt's Mazeppa**, again with the Hungarian Radio Orchestra. In this early example of his art, Melles aims at clarity and energy in a way that emphasizes the over-insistence of the music. He does not disguise the banality of the final march. Around thirty years later, with the Milan RAI Symphony orchestra (10 April 1986), he shaved a minute and a quarter off his earlier timing and went for the long line, as well as for a more singing quality where the music allows it. The end sounds genuinely jubilant in Milan. The Hungarian performance may be an example of the recording studio killing the music. More likely, Melles had learnt something over the years about placing climaxes. The Milan performance finds the music in the score, the Hungarian one does not.

Escape from oppression

All the Hungarian appointments listed above terminated in 1957. This was probably the year in which his name was officially struck from the lists. Most accounts, as well as the weight of probability, have it that he was across the border before 1956 was out. The ultimate stop was Austria, but in 1958 the Melleses were in Luxemburg, where Judith gave birth to their daughter Sunnyi on 7 October. Sunnyi, like her mother, became an actress. Indeed, while the English-speaking public may know little of her beyond a fleeting presence in the Inspector Derrick series, her curriculum shows her to have been a major figure in German theatre. The Melles' marriage broke up in or around 1961⁸ and Sunnyi was brought up by her mother, who

⁷ Data from Gray's catalogue.

⁸ The German Wikipedia entry for Sunnyi Melles states that her parents separated when she was three: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunnyi_Melles.

settled in Switzerland. Sunnyi Melles seems to have inherited an interest in music, nevertheless. She has often appeared performances of musical works that have a part for the speaking voice. In 1963, Melles's second marriage took place, to Gertrud Dertnig. Melles achieved Austrian citizenship in 1966, so had remained stateless for almost a decade⁹.

Also in 1958 and in Luxemburg, Melles was named chief conductor of the Grand Orchestre Symphonique de RTL (Luxemburg Radio), following the death of its founder and longstanding conductor (1933-1939, 1946-1958) Henri Pensis. Here, however, we begin to find the pattern of brief stays that punctuates Melles's career. Later the same year, he was replaced by Louis de Froment, who remained till 1980.



Issued in 1958 was a recording on Vox of **Mozart's Piano Concerti no. 19 in F, K.459** and **no. 20 in D minor, K.466**, in which Melles accompanied **Ingrid Haebler** and conducted the "Vienna Pro Musica Orchestra", identified on later issues as the Vienna Symphony Orchestra¹⁰.

Ingrid Haebler's early Vox records tended to show a vitality and commitment she did not always find later. K.459 is not a good example, though. Melles conducts the first movement in a clipped military manner that has the heart sinking. Haebler's first entry suggests a more singing musicality, but she readily falls in line and is unpleasantly kittenish with the second subject. The way Melles ends each two-bar phrase in the second movement with a bump is a good example of how this music must not be played. The tempo is too fast to allow a more than superficial account, but within this limit, Haebler does at least show the conductor how to end the phrases sensitively. The finale has a certain animal vitality from both parties, but they also peck and jab at the short quavers most insensitively. Quite one of the most horrible Mozart performances I have ever heard.

Fortunately, the great D minor concerto is much more satisfactory, being generally vital and disciplined. In second subject territory in the first movement, Haebler is still inclined to mistake kittenishness for characterization, and both she and Melles are over-fond of smartly pecked eighth-notes – the orchestral accompaniment is irritatingly intrusive at various points in the second movement for this reason. In the central section of this movement, Haebler is rather dogged. She manages a vital finale, but the impression is that she is going along with the music rather than creating it. Not a great performance, then, but a passably good one. Melles was not asked to record again for Vox, nor did the Vienna Symphony Orchestra engage him on their own account till 1963¹¹.

The unsympathetic impression created by Melles may be at least partly due to the pianist's obliging him to take tempi in which he did not believe. On a much later occasion, with the Orchestra del Teatro Comunale di Bologna on 25 October 1980, he offers a relaxed, amiable accompaniment to the soprano **Luciana Serra**

⁹ This is a deduction from the facts, but Sunnyi Melles has specifically related that her mother was stateless and that she herself was without a passport for fifteen years. See the German entry in Wikipedia: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunnyi_Melles

¹⁰ Gray's catalogue gives a date of 22 June 1957 and the number PL 11000. But, since it gives the pianist as Alfred Brendel, there may be some confusion over the entry.

¹¹ Conducting the Vienna Symphony Orchestra for Vox does not appear to have been a path to their good graces. Witness the fact that Jonel Perlea made many excellent recordings with them during the 1950s, but never conducted a single concert with them.

in **Mozart's** aria **Popoli di Tessaglia K.316**. This YouTube offering seems to be an in-house recording and sounds as if it was made in a church rather than a theatre. But the ear easily adjusts, and Luciana Serra's bright, even tone and effortless command of a killing tessitura (it goes a tone higher even than the Queen of the Night arias) come across unscathed.

1960s and 1970s – Consolidation in Germany and Austria

The 1960s found Melles increasingly present on the Western European scene. The curious pattern continued to take shape, however, that, the more prestigious the orchestra and venue, the more likely it was to be a one-off.

The best-known case is that of the **Bayreuth Festival**, where he conducted *Tannhäuser* in 1966 with a notable cast: **Jess Thomas** (Tannhäuser), **Leonie Rysanek** (Elizabeth), **Ludmila Dvorakova** (Venus), **Hermann Prey** (Wolfram), **Martti Talvela** (Landgrave), **Willy Hartmann** (Walther), **Gerd Nienstedt** (Biterolf), **Hermann Winkler** (Heinrich), **Dieter Slembeck** (Reinmar Von Zweiter) and **Olivera Miljakovic** (young shepherd).

This, Melles' sole appearance at Bayreuth, was not a new production, but a revival of a Wieland Wagner production that had been conducted in 1961 and 1962 by Wolfgang Sawallisch. The 1962 performance was issued on LP and has been a mainstay of the recorded Wagner repertoire. After missing 1963, the production returned from 1964 to 1967 with a different conductor each year: Suitner (1964), Cluytens (1965), who had also conducted Wieland's previous production in 1955, Melles (1966) and Klobucar (1967). Melles joined the honourable company of Krips, Maticic, Schippers, Heger, Erede, Zender, De Waart and Elder as conductors who have appeared at Bayreuth once only¹². The curious thing is that I can find no reference to any other operatic performance, Wagnerian or otherwise, conducted by Melles except in concert. I feel he must have had operatic experience, since I cannot believe Bayreuth would have engaged a conductor with none. But operas have a way of circulating unofficially, for the singers if not for the conductor, and nothing else conducted by Melles in the theatre has come to light. This *Tannhäuser* has been around on unofficial labels. I have been able to hear four Rysanek-dominated excerpts.

On the strength of these, clarity and reasonable vitality seem the principal features of Melles' conducting. The result of this fairly light, unforced touch is that the introduction to "Dich teure Halle" sounds more like Weber than Wagner. Melles does give his singers their space, though – and in Rysanek's case, apart from a dodgy top note here and there, what singing this is! There is magnificent artistry and a burning intensity to her work. That said, while he follows her well, in "Allmächtige Jungfrau" Melles does little to colour the orchestral writing. The sinister low clarinet phrases, for example, make as little mark as would be possible without actually omitting them entirely. The following, mainly orchestral, quiet interlude sounds placid, almost Mendelssohnian. In fairness, I should hear the entire performance. Thus far, it is difficult to avoid the impression that Melles was competent, but a size small for the place and the job.

In 1965, Melles had made his first appearance with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (see Appendix 2). He was engaged again in 1966 and 1967, then in 1970 he achieved the high honour of conducting in their subscription series. This, in Austrian musical life, was the equivalent of canonisation for a conductor, but maybe it did not go so well, for he never led the orchestra again¹³. Beethoven figured largely on all his VPO programmes.

¹² I am indebted for this list to Christian Thielemann: *My Life with Wagner*, English translation by Anthea Bell, Pegasus 2016

¹³ In this review, https://bachtrack.com/es_ES/review-wiener-philharmoniker-van-zweden-bruckner-8-april-2014, Ken Ward suggests that he heard Bruckner's 8th Symphony in 1983 with the Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Carl

During the 1967-8 season, Melles appeared with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra¹⁴. Other guests during the season included Barbirolli, Szell, Solti and Atzmon. Unfortunately, the Berlin Philharmonic, unlike the Vienna Philharmonic, does not have a searchable database for all its concerts, so far as I can discover. I therefore cannot say what he conducted and whether he conducted them again.

Melles gained some sort of a footing in Paris. On 8 January 1966 he conducted a Beethoven programme with the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra: Prometheus Overture, the Violin Concerto (with Christian Ferras) and the Fifth Symphony. On 30 April 1969, by which time the orchestra had been renamed the Orchestre de Paris, he opened proceedings with Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony, after which Artur Rubinstein offered two concertos: Chopin's Second and Beethoven's "Emperor"¹⁵.

These seem to have been Melles' only engagements with Paris's top orchestra. As so often, he found his level with radio orchestras. I have been able to hear a programme he gave with the ORTF Philharmonique in 1968: **Gluck's *Iphigenie en Aulide* overture** (with the Wagner concert ending), **Mozart's Piano Concerto K.467** (with **Andor Foldes**), **Beethoven's Second Symphony** and **Kodály's *Dances of Galanta***. The Gluck is trenchantly played and well shaded but does not avoid a certain air of caution that I do not find in the best alternative versions. The Mozart starts rather slowly and one gets the impression that Melles is having to hold the orchestra back from the tempo they feel naturally. It is clear, however, when Foldes enters, that this is the tempo he wants. There is a certain majesty and transparency to the music-making which is not compromised by the slowish tempo. The cadenza is odd and lacks flair. The second movement is dignified in its avoidance of false romanticism. It's a pity the solo line is more sculpted than sung. The finale is very fast but with no especial *joi de vivre*.

The Beethoven makes an interesting comparison with the very broad 1995 performance I discuss below. Considering that in 1968 Melles did not play the first movement repeat, I am surprised that the Paris version is only six minutes shorter. The performance explains why Melles was so often called to conduct Beethoven symphonies, but also why he was usually called to conduct them with lesser orchestras. This is "received opinion" Beethoven, but it is lithe and transparent with a hint of the Weingartner "lean beef" Beethoven. It spins along very nicely, perhaps too much so in the second movement, where I prefer the broader but not lugubrious 1995 performance. The Kodály is lively and well-shaped. The orchestra, fallible in Beethoven, is made to sound a better band here. It is difficult to fault the performance, but it is pleasant rather than inspiring. There is nothing of the dark passion or the sizzling vitality Jonel Perlea got out of another less than top class orchestra. One thing of interest, however, is that the orchestra, throughout the programme, does not sound in the least French – remember the piquant colours of Schuricht's Beethoven and Cluytens' Debussy and Ravel not so very long before. Was the ORTF orchestra the first to shed those indelible French tones, or was Melles more of an orchestral moulder than you would think?

Another Paris broadcast I have been able to hear – albeit with a chunk missing at the beginning of part 2 – has him conducting **Schumann's *Das Paradies und der Peri*** in 1972. The soloists were **Benita Valente**

Melles, replacing an indisposed Eugen Jochum. The VPO database shows neither a performance under Melles nor a planned one under Jochum in that year. The Vienna Symphony Orchestra database lists four performances of this work under Melles in 1983 (13-16 January), so Ken Ward must have heard one of these. There is no reason why he should not be correct in recalling that Melles was replacing an indisposed Jochum, however. Jochum conducted the VSO 109 times from 1939 to 1985, but not in 1983.

¹⁴ Reported in Billboard, 13 May 1967.

¹⁵ See searchable database of the Orchestre de Paris: <http://www.tce-archives.fr/document/4419-orchestre-de-parissociete-des-concerts-du-conservatoireherbert-von-karajankarl-mellesarthur-rubinstein>

(soprano), **Barbara Vogel** (soprano), **Ruth Hesse** (mezzo-soprano), **Heribert Steinbach** (tenor) and **Gerd Nienstedt** (baritone), with the Choir and Orchestre National de l'ORTF. This still rare work was practically unknown then, though Giulini pushed it when he could. Melles pushes it in another way. He approaches the music from the Mendelssohnian end, keeping it well on the move with some of the slower movements taken at practically double the marked tempo. He gets good playing from the orchestra almost throughout and it all flows logically and naturally. Moreover, the soloists are good, with only occasional evidence that they have a job squeezing some of their words into Melles' tempi. Benita Valente's pure, unforced soprano soars gloriously and would be the main reason for resurrecting this performance.

If the music was new to you, you would not necessarily suppose that it might be done in any other way. Nevertheless, there are drawbacks. A short cut in no. 22 is a minor matter compared with the merciless hacking and even rewriting applied by the great Giulini. More seriously, French Radio obviously had an eye on their francs and made do with five soloists instead of eight. Only the Peri herself is not required to take two parts. This obviously increases the sense that we are listening to a choral symphony rather than a drama. The chief objection, though, is that, even if you did not know the music previously, you might wonder that Schumann of all composers engages the emotions so little. Go to Giulini and, whatever view you take of his editing, he gives the soloists time to breathe and illuminates many corners of the music. It is much more involving. All the same, he can be soggy in the movements that are actually meant to bound forward and in the penultimate, while he is slower and more expressive than Melles, the music is still flowing considerably faster than written.

I have just the last two numbers, conserved more or less by accident – I do not even know who the soloists are – from a Milan performance under Vladimir Delman. These last two numbers take about 9 minutes under both Melles and Giulini, 15 under Delman. In Melles' case, the difference lies in the tempo of the penultimate number. In Giulini's case it is because his pruning shears reduce the last number to a dog's breakfast, culminating in a vulgar rewrite of the choral parts. Delman takes Schuman at his word in the penultimate number, producing a mystic, groping feeling that then explodes in a final chorus as fast as Melles', but somehow finding more space for phrasing. I hope I shall hear this performance in its entirety one day. The Melles performance shows pretty well both his strengths and his limits.

Melles has remained a practically unknown name in the UK. In February 1968 he was billed to conduct two programmes with the New Philharmonia Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall¹⁶. While I cannot state with certainty that these were his only London appearances, nothing else has emerged¹⁷.

Clearly, then, with what I shall call, at the risk of offending several highly professional bodies, "second-ranking orchestras", things went better. A performance of **Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto** with the young **Martha Argerich** and Melles conducting the Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra on 10 February 1965 has recently surfaced on Doremi (DHR 8030). He was active with the Orchestre Symphonique RTBF, formed to replace Franz André's old Belgian Radio Orchestra in 1978. Melles conducted Beethoven's Seventh with

¹⁶ Listed in Musical Times, January 1968.

¹⁷ The BBC Proms searchable database, for example, shows that he never conducted in this series. Furthermore, while it is dangerous to rely on long memories, I query whether Melles conducted at least the second of the billed programmes at all. Included in the second of the concerts, on 6 February 1968, was Dvořák's Cello Concerto with Vladimir Orloff as soloist. I have very clear memories of reading a review in "The Times" of a performance of this work by Orloff in which Sir Adrian Boult was the conductor. I remember this because of the reviewer's comment, after remarking that many performances of the Dvořák leave one feeling that it should be confined to the recording studio, where its balance problems can be sorted out, "Sir Adrian Boult had Dvořák's twittering aviary firmly under control". It seems likely that this was the performance planned under a presumably indisposed Melles. How many performance of this particular concerto would Orloff have given in London?

them on 2 March 1979¹⁸. Furthermore, the Vienna Symphony Orchestra's searchable database (see Appendix 1) shows that Melles conducted this orchestra on a yearly basis from 1963 through to 1984, excepting only 1982. His total of 140 appearances compares favourably with Karl Böhm's 142, though it was exceeded by conductors such as Giulini (181), Prêtre (314), Swarowsky (520) and Sawallisch (626), all of whom held official posts with the orchestra. This is not intended as an exhaustive list.

A list of the soloists at Melles's VSO concerts reads like a roll-call of the great and good in those years. Programmes were mainly traditional, with a strong emphasis on Beethoven symphonies, though curiously, he never got to perform the Ninth with them¹⁹. A certain number of modern works, some of them premières, were given. There is a strong Austro-German bias to these – Blacher, von Einem, Wellesz (première of the Ninth Symphony), Rubin, Henze, Vogel – but the performance of Britten's War Requiem with Harper, Schreier and Nienstedt is worth noting. Other major offerings were two performances of Mahler's Eighth Symphony in 1970, when it was still fairly rare, and, later the same year, Schmidt's *Das Buch mit sieben Siegeln*. Less significantly, except perhaps for Melles himself, were several morning programmes which consisted of the Austrian National Anthem and just one or two brief items of music. Evidently these were State occasions of some kind, such would only be entrusted to a figure with a national profile.



Gray's catalogue lists two recordings made by Melles and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra in 1963, though both have proved impossible to track down. **Liszt's First Piano Concerto**, played by **Ruth Slenczynska**, was set down on 4 September 1963 and issued on Decca DL 710084²⁰. The cover shows that the Vienna Symphony Orchestra was not named as such and that on the other side, the same pianist played Saint-Saëns' Second Piano Concerto with Henry Swoboda conducting the Symphony of the Air.

Gottfried von Einem's Symphonic Scenes op.22 were recorded on 25 November 1963 and issued on the Austrian label Amadeo (AVRS 5017). Melles conducted three performances of the same work the following year (28-30 October 1964)²¹.

If these discs have eluded me, I can at least report on **Rubin's Symphony no. 6**, an off-air tape of which circulates among aficionados. It is clearly taken from one of the run of five performances Melles conducted from 11 to 15 November 1975.

The Viennese composer Marcel Rubin (1905-1995) studied with Franz Schmidt and later with Darius Milhaud. As a Jew, he fled Austria in 1938 for Paris, but here, too, he briefly suffered detention. In 1942, he emigrated to Mexico, returning to Austria in 1947. The list of honours he received in later life – see Wikipedia and others – makes heart-warming reading, but performances of his music do not seem to have ranked especially high among them.

¹⁸ See this retrospective tribute to the orchestra: https://www.rtf.be/musiq3/article/detail_retroportrait-du-nouvel-orchestre-symphonique-de-la-rtbf?id=8411778. The *Dizionario degli Interpreti Musicali* (TEA-UTET 1993) states that he was active with this orchestra from 1980.

¹⁹ Unless we count a snatch of it in the form of the European Anthem on 3 April 1975. The interesting thing about this date is that Austria did not become a member of the European Union until 1995.

²⁰ Information from Gray, including identification of the VSO. The number implies an American Decca issue only, hence the rarity in Europe.

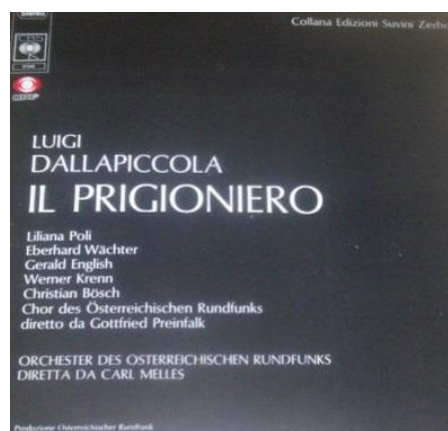
²¹ Information from Gray and from the VSO database.

The slow third movement of the Sixth Symphony – there are ten – has a gravity that might put British listeners in mind of Edmund Rubbra. Elsewhere, he relies on quirkiness and perkiness to advance the argument. However, though he sometimes draws upon Milhaud-derived counterpoint, he never overfills the textures, which remain luminous and clear. The ultimate impression is of a certain serenity.

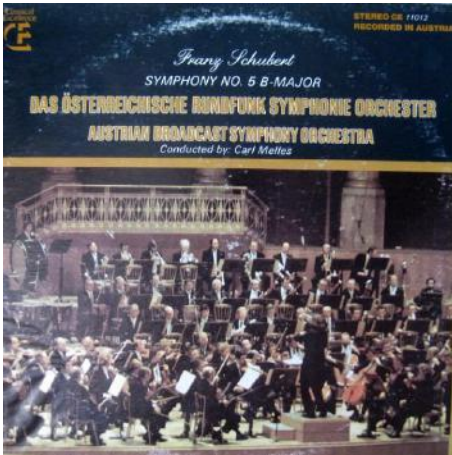
The off-air tape I have heard has high hiss and a short blip in the finale. The recording itself is quite good – maybe a good quality tape will emerge from Austrian Radio one day. Melles certainly makes the most of the beautiful slow movement and is probably right not to press the faster movements too hard.

Another relationship that seems to have stuck, though without an official position, was with what was called, from its foundation in 1969, the Austrian Radio (ORF) Symphony Orchestra. In 1996 it was renamed the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra. A few recordings, some more official than others, document Melles' association with this orchestra. Two of them provide further opportunities to hear Melles conduct opera, though not in the theatre.

The most significant of these is surely that of **Dallapiccola's Il Prigioniero**. This live performance was issued, from Austrian Radio tapes, on Italian CBS 61344. The soloists were **Liliana Poli, Eberhard Wächter, Gerald English, Werner Krenn** and **Christian Bösch**. This recording was awarded the prize of the Italian Record Critics' Association for 1974. Since then it has been somewhat upstaged by a historical issue under Rosbaud (1955) and studio recordings by Dorati and Salonen. I have been able to hear only the Prologue. Melles is in committed form and Liliana Poli is not only secure, but manages to get more of the words across than is usually possible with this sort of music. More I cannot say, but on the strength of the beginning, Melles delivers the right punch.



Unofficially circulating is a **Beethoven** bicentenary outing, given on 14 December 1970, of the first version of *Fidelio*, **Leonore**. This EBU broadcast had a notable cast, consisting of **Gwyneth Jones** (Leonore), **James King** (Florestan), **Theo Adam** (Rocco), **Gerd Nienstedt** (Don Pizarro), **Tothraud Hausmann** (Marzelline), **Werner Hollweg** (Jacquino) and **Erberhard Wächter** (Don Fernando). I have heard two extracts – the grave-digging scene and the duet “O namelose Freude”. Gwyneth Jones is sometimes under duress but very much in the part, King is highly efficient. I have not had the opportunity to go back to their version of *Fidelio* under Böhm, made around the same time. Long memories suggest that Böhm unleashed a tremendous outburst of joy in this duet without actually going very fast. Melles certainly has a sound Beethovenian style but, as in *Tannhäuser*, he seems reluctant to push beyond a certain point. The orchestral rumblings in the grave-digging scene are classically contained. An interesting comparison in the Leonore-Florestan duet comes from another bicentennial performance of *Leonore*, given with RAI forces in Turin under Erich Leinsdorf. His Leonore and Florestan were Claire Watson and Ernst Kozub. Leinsdorf, as we know, could be dry and pedantic in the studio, but those who heard him live often encountered a very different conductor. As this duet begins he has the singers literally hurling themselves and their notes at each other, then holding back to rest ecstatically on the ritardandos. This capacity to challenge the orchestra, to live on the brink, is surely one of the things that divides the great from the merely good. Leinsdorf himself did not always provide it. Melles, so far as I have heard, never did.



Melles made several other recordings with this orchestra for smaller Austrian labels, such as Classical Excellence, during the 1970s. These included a series – but not a cycle – of Schubert symphonies. I have heard the Eighth – “Unfinished”. Nos. 5 and 9, and possibly 3, also exist.

The “Unfinished” gets a beautifully graded and phrased performance. Without sounding schmaltzy, I think one would guess that it hails from Vienna, in the relaxed lilt of the second theme of the first movement, for example. The second movement is unusually successful in finding a tempo that neither drags nor presses ahead. Those for whom this symphony is the epitome of

loveliness might look no further. Those who seek drama or pain might feel short-changed. Even they, however, might recognize that, by the end, what emerges, without any attempt to labour the point, is actually a farewell to loveliness. This is certainly performance to rank with those of many more celebrated conductors.

Dates for most of these performances are hard to come by. His recording of Bruckner’s Second Symphony, which has circulated on a number of budget-price labels, is dated 1977²². I prefer to discuss this, however, in tandem with the performance of the Sixth from Melles’ Milan period, which shows a more convincing and individual approach to the composer.

A couple of later recordings by Melles and the ORF SO, apparently dated 1994, will be discussed with the latter part of Melles’s career. Two further recordings sound worth tracking down. One is a recording of **Schmidt’s Third Symphony** (Classical Excellence CE 11033) so rare that even MWI’s indefatigable Michael Herman has not yet caught up with it²³. Melles clearly had a particular affection for Schmidt. As well as the *Sieben Siegeln*, which he also performed in Milan, his VSO programmes include Symphonies 1, 2 and 4. He therefore conducted all four at one time or another.



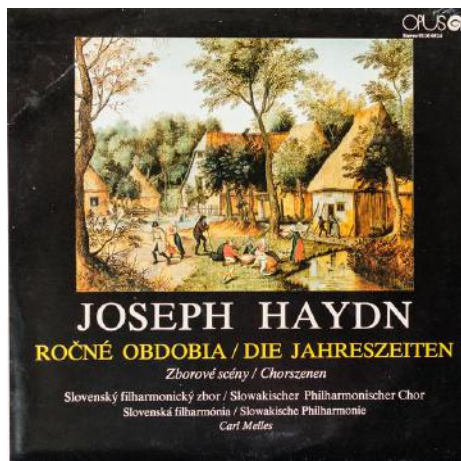
Also enticing is a performance of **Dallapiccola’s Canti di Liberazione** (Classical Excellence CE 11026). This is presumably taken from a concert that Melles and the ORF SO gave at the Salzburg Festival 13 July 1971. The Dallapiccola shared the programme with Ligeti’s Requiem.

One further ORF broadcast, undated, has circulated among collectors: **Rubin’s Symphony no. 7**. Like the sixth symphony, the seventh is notable for a grave and extremely beautiful slow movement. The work opens more strenuously than the previous one, but the first movement also accommodates passages of calm and, again, he does not let his counterpoint become too crowded. Rubin’s perky-quirky manner returns in the second movement and the finale seems to promise more of it, but gradually acquires strength. I am not sure if it builds to a convincing conclusion – the audience, too, seem a little surprised that it ends where it does.

²² See John Berky’s omni-comprehensive site <https://www.abruckner.com/discography/>.

²³ http://www.musicweb-international.com/herman_discogs.htm. Reviewer Bob Briggs has heard it though: http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2010/Sept10/schmidt_8572119.htm.

Melles is again a sympathetic exponent. I wondered if he might have drawn more quiet intensity from the slow movement, the second half of which is all very soft, and whether he might have thrown caution to the winds and rammed home the finale more forcefully. These doubts might dwindle as I get to know the work better. The recording is easier on the ear than that of the sixth symphony and the performance is at least an adequate one. I have not quite pinned down Rubin as a composer yet, but I am at least curious to hear the other eight symphonies.



By the 1970s, then, Melles was a regular feature of Austrian musical life, a sort of de facto second conductor to the Vienna Symphony Orchestra and the Austrian Radio Symphony orchestra. The “Der Standard” obituary adds to these the Niederösterreichisches Tonkünstlerorchester. Melles certainly conducted the première of Wellesz’ “Symphonischer Epilog” with this orchestra on 13 May 1977²⁴. He also taught conducting at the Salzburg Mozarteum during the Seventies. Of the several conductors who name him in their curriculum, Lior Shambadal, currently conductor of the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, is probably the best known. We might mention here a curious disc, made in 1976 and issued by Opus, in which Melles conducted the Slovak Philharmonic Chorus and Orchestra in just the choral scenes from

Haydn’s “The Seasons”.

I shall close this section with a performance that shows Melles at his best. The work is **Mozart’s Missa Solemnis in C, K.337**, and this 1972 broadcast was by the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Chorus with **Arleen Auger** (soprano), **Ursula Gust** (mezzo-soprano), **Manfred Schmidt** (tenor) and **Gerd Nienstedt** (bass). While Melles was inclined to be swift and plain-speaking to a fault with romantic works, here he gives the music time to breathe, combining majesty with vitality and resilience. The Agnus Dei is flowing but not unfeeling. If this recording were ever to be officially released, I imagine it would be for Arleen Auger, who caps an excellent quartet of soloists and is in glorious voice throughout. But the performance as a whole would be a strong contender among pre-HIP versions for its fine sense of jubilation.

Appearances outside Europe seem to have been rare. Various biographies speak of visits to the USA, South Africa and Japan. For the latter, at least, we know from Billboard of 9 October 1965 that he conducted two concerts with the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony orchestra later that year. But, insofar as Melles established a conducting base outside Austria and Germany, it was in Italy.

Italy and the RAI

The earliest Italian appearance known to me was on 13 May 1960²⁵, when Melles conducted a programme with the Turin RAI Symphony Orchestra consisting of Bach’s Third Brandenburg Concerto, Beethoven’s Fourth Symphony, **Lalo’s Symphonie Espagnole**, with **Angelo Stefanato** as violin soloist, and Kodály’s Dances of Galanta. A performance of the Lalo by Stefanato has been put on YouTube by the violinist’s daughter without any information as to date, orchestra or conductor. A request for information has met

²⁴ Information from Wellesz Archive: http://www.egonwellesz.at/e_wellesz_archiv.htm#1979

²⁵ This is the sole concert by Melles listed on the searchable database of the RAI National Symphony Orchestra: <http://www.osn.teche.rai.it/>. This site is declaredly work in progress. One day, it will give details of all concerts given by all four RAI orchestras. As of now, it is limited to Turin, and does not yet give a full list even of that orchestra’s programmes. It is already an invaluable resource, even so.

with no reply, but a connoisseur of Italian violinists tells me it is very unlikely Stefanato gave more than the one performance of this work. The recording certainly sounds like a RAI one, though unusually well preserved, given before a large and enthusiastic audience.

We have met Angelo Stefanato in my article on Ferruccio Scaglia, where I discussed their 1958 performance of the second Wienawski concerto. In Lalo, as in Wienawski, Stefanato adopts a straightforward, though passionate and brilliant, approach to a work which caused many violinists of the past to dawdle. In this case, though, there is a suggestion that the conductor, whether it is Melles or not, is anxious to keep things on the straight and narrow. I do not wish to imply that Stefanato is straitjacketed, and the orchestra is buoyant and not at all heavy. Still, the sort of expressive freedom and folkloristic inflections that we hear from Mischa Elman, and which his conductor Vladimir Golschmann seems to take as natural – see my article on this conductor – are not on the menu here. Some may prefer it that way. As was usual at the time, only four movements were played.

Another violinist whom Melles accompanied, this time in the **Mendelssohn Concerto**, with the Turin RAI SO, on an unspecified date, was **Nina Beilina**. Again, there is a slight doubt, since the YouTuber who posted it describes the conductor as “K. Mellesh”. I presume this is his transliteration of the broadcaster’s announcement²⁶.

I have already admired this violinist’s performance, with Vladimir Delman (Milan, 30 June 1988), of Tchaikovsky’s *Sérénade Mélancolique*. Nina Beilina was born in Moscow in 1937 and has been living in the USA since 1977. Her teachers include David Oistrakh. She gives an exceptionally beautiful performance of the Mendelssohn, a concerto that can easily sound automatic. She takes a fairly wide range of tempi but counters the risk of over-romanticism with a beautifully pure tone, never lush, and an avoidance of hysterics. The result is that, while the music may seem more romantic than usual, it always sounds like Mendelssohn. I have rarely heard more made of the interlude between the last two movements. Melles – or “Mellesh” – provides a real collaboration in the first two movements but sometimes lags behind – or cannot prevent the orchestra from doing so – in the finale. While this is a pity, the beauty of the soloist’s interpretation shines through. The YouTube recording sounds remarkably well. Precisely because she is so little recorded, Beilina may yet become a cult-figure among female violinists, like Johanna Martzy or Edith Peinemann.

One RAI concerto performance that Melles certainly did conduct took place with their Milan orchestra on 23 March 1965, when Sviatoslav Richter played the Grieg Concerto. The recording is said to survive, but I have not heard it²⁷. Richter must have been reasonably satisfied, since he played two concertos in Italy the following year with Melles conducting. On 11-12 October 1966 they gave the Tchaikovsky First Concerto at La Scala, while shortly afterwards, on 15-16 October 1966, it was the turn of Mozart’s K482 in Florence, with the Maggio Musicale Orchestra. The former of these was the first of only two programmes Melles conducted with La Scala Orchestra – he never conducted an opera there. A cutting signed simply “V.”, from an unidentified newspaper²⁸, probably “Il Corriere della Sera”, noted that Richter “was helped by

²⁶ Another case where a request for information has met with no response. The only performance of the Mendelssohn Concerto by Beilina listed in the RAI National SO database at present is dated 24-25.2.2000 and the conductor was Dimitri Kitaenko. Given that anyone who hears “Kitaenko” and thinks he has heard “Mellesh” would not be listening to music at all, I take it that Beilina gave an earlier performance with Melles, not yet included in the database.

²⁷ This Richter blogspot <http://sviatoslavrichter.blogspot.it/2014/09/i-concerti-milano-di-sviatoslav-richter.html> tells us that it “has circulated widely among collectors, but was never been commercialized”. The discography at <http://www.trovar.com/str/discs/>, which lists unofficial issues where known, makes no mention of it.

²⁸ Visible at the blogspot mentioned in note. 22. The translation is mine.

conducting (by the young Carl Melles) that, if not exceptional, was nevertheless refined and meticulous". The programme opened with the Suite from Kodály's *Háry Janos* and concluded with Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. "V." commented that "in both of these, he seemed inclined to curb impulses and smooth the contours more than necessary. A taste for full, sonorous and modern timbres nonetheless enabled him to obtain frequently admirable results from the orchestra". We might note in passing that 40-year-old conductors were still considered young in 1966. Melles's other date with La Scala orchestra was on 11-13 July 1979. The programme consisted of Mozart's Symphony no. 39 and Piano Concerto K.467, with Rudolf Buchbinder as soloist, and Schubert's First Symphony. This looks like another case of Melles' ability to reach the highest places but not to stay there.

Not many reference books even mention Melles' 5-year tenure²⁹ with the Milan RAI Symphony Orchestra. Yet this seems to have been the one occasion since leaving Hungary where he held the post of principal conductor to an orchestra for a substantial period. Since this was a radio orchestra – "was", alas, is the word – the RAI archives presumably contain most, even all, of his concerts. Even if they were readily accessible, though, they would presumably reveal numerous performances of standard repertoire that have been bettered, orchestrally and interpretatively, elsewhere, together with appearances by some distinguished soloists and a number of less well-known works. Such material as I have heard tends to bear this out. Major projects that I have not heard include Haydn's *Creation* (3 April 1987), Mozart's *DaVIDE Penitente* (2 December 1988) and Schmidt's *Das Buch mit sieben Siegeln* (11 December 1987). Given the rarity of the latter, and Melles' consistent championing of this composer, it would be interesting to hear it.

Another project of some scale was a cycle of **Schubert Symphonies** given in the summer of 1986. From these I have heard the **Fourth**, which was played on 20 June. My reactions are ambivalent. Maybe further instalments from the cycle would clarify matters. The orchestra produces a consistently full, rounded sound. It is not always immaculate and certain imprecise attacks suggest they had not a very incisive baton in front of them. Melles does obtain, however, an impressive driving energy in the forte parts of the outer movements. It is the consistent fullness that worries me, since practically nothing comes across as less than mezzo forte. The rather close recording does not help and levels may have been further flattened for broadcasting, but occasional glimpses of real piano suggest that, apart from these, there were none on offer. In any case, the fullness of timbre does not sound like soft playing with the volume turned up, it sounds like mezzo forte playing. This is a pity, because the basic approach, with steady, even broad, but not heavy tempi and a good mean between Schubertian relaxation and Beethovenian drive, is appealing. OK as far as it goes is likely to be the verdict. Maybe it sounded better in the hall – the audience sound quite pleased at the end.

Another standard repertoire piece, though not typical of Melles' earlier Vienna repertoire, is **Respighi's Fontane di Roma**, given on 10 September 1985. This is a steady-as-she-goes "Fountains", but with sufficient moulding and luminosity to avoid ponderousness. Franz André and his Belgian forces – just to stay within the "Forgotten Artists" series – show more poetry and refinement, but the Milan audience got a respectable deal.

As for distinguished soloists, on 30 March 1984, **Aldo Ciccolini** offered the **Chopin Second Piano Concerto**. The RAI presenter who included this in a Ciccolini anthology taken from the archives, described it as a "lesson in style". Indeed, insofar as Ciccolini shows how to accommodate the decorative passage-work with freedom yet without distorting the rhythm or the melodic line, I would agree. In more strenuous moments, his tendency to accent strongly the first note of each group leads to doggedness. And then there is the po-

²⁹ Here is the only internet source I have found that does: http://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/List_of_Orchestras. The *Dizionario degli Interpreti Musicali* (TEA-UTET 1993) gives Melles' tenure, with dates.

faced way he leads into the finale ... But the problem is not really this. No one has ever spoken of a magical tone in relation to Ciccolini, except perhaps to remark that he had not got one. You might be wondering if the recording is to blame, but for once this RAI offering is pretty good, and Ciccolini sounds as I heard him live in the Ravel G major. That is, secure, with well projected tone, but a bit dry, seemingly unable to release the piano's longer resonances or its more dulcet cantabiles.

The orchestral support is very good. In punctuality, it shows why so many soloists were happy to appear with Melles, and the orchestra, far from sounding ropey – except where the trumpet has its say near the start of the finale – is mellow and well blended. There is all the dynamic range which was apparently missing in some of their other recordings. This is not the sort of concerto where a good conductor could ever upstage a less good soloist, yet in the exchanges with the bassoon at the start of the first movement development section, this is momentarily achieved.

Slightly off the beaten track, I have already compared Melles' very good 1986 performance of **Liszt's Mazeppa** with his earlier Hungarian version. It is becoming noticeable that Melles was a reluctant ambassador for the music of his native Hungary – indeed, most non-Hungarian conductors have performed more. One contemporary who evidently interested him was **Ligeti**. His Vienna Symphony Orchestra programmes had included *Lontano* (1970) and *Melodies* (1972), and he had conducted the *Requiem* at the Salzburg Festival in 1971.

He returned to the **Requiem** in Milan on 22 September 1985. The soloists were **Julia Paszthy** (soprano) and **Klara Takacs** (mezzo-soprano). A work like this stands or falls by whether the chorus master has done his job properly. As far as I can tell, the chorus here is well prepared both technically and musically. So all praise to the chorus master of the Milan RAI Chorus, **Vittorio Rosetta**. All the same, I have no wish to belittle Melles' contribution. While I would not be the person to check on the accuracy of it all, the music makes the same disembodied, spine-shivering, nerve-jangling impact that it does in any other performance. There is a wide dynamic range – something that Melles seems not to have insisted upon in standard repertoire. The beginning is barely perceptible, the dramatic outbursts have a shattering impact. I will leave it for experts on this repertoire to say where this stands among the several recordings that have been made. The Milan audience certainly got a good presentation of the music.

I have left to last the one Milan performance I have heard that suggests that Melles could sometimes show distinct individuality as an interpreter. This is **Bruckner's Sixth Symphony**, which was played on 6 November 1987. Below is a list of selected Bruckner Sixths, with all timings but those of Melles taken from John Berky's Bruckner site³⁰. They are listed on the basis of the total timing, from the fastest to the slowest, and represent, not a personal choice, but conductors whose Bruckner is generally well regarded, plus Catherine Rückwardt as the one other conductor who takes less than 50 minutes. Timings are no way to review a performance, obviously, and a blow-by-blow comparison of all these and maybe others would be the subject for a different article. However, timings clearly do say something when Melles is more than three minutes faster than the next fastest performance, and when in three movements out of four – his Scherzo is just "briskish normal" – he virtually beats all comers. Only Rückwardt drives through the first movement more swiftly and, amazingly, Klemperer's Adagio in 1961 was a mere four seconds longer.

³⁰ <https://www.abruckner.com/>

	I	II	III	IV	TT
Melles, RAI Milan 1987	13:47	12:41	8:14	11:30	46:13
Rückwardt Mainz 2007	13:15	15:51	7:25	12:36	49:30
Venzago Berne SO 2011	14:08	14:25	7:44	14:13	50:34
Andreae VSO 1953	14:15	15:31	8:28	12:17	50:49
Klemperer Concertgebouw 1961	17:17	12:45	8:38	12:01	51:00
Steinberg Boston SO 1970	14:53	16:15	8:02	13:05	52:15
Haitink Concertgebouw 1970	15:16	17:25	7:51	13:27	53:59
Klemperer NPO 1964	17:02	14:42	9:23	13:48	54:54
Wand NDR 1996	16:30	15:45	8:48	13:57	55:00
Jochum BRSO 1966	16:31	17:07	7:55	13:20	55:05
Keilberth BPO 1963	17:06	14:40	8:46	15:18	55:50
Horenstein LSO 1963	15:59	16:50	8:34	14:43	56:00
Karajan BPO 1979	15:16	18:58	7:52	15:13	57:36
Barenboim CSO 1977	16:35	18:13	8:48	14:32	58:08
Celibidache MPO 1991	17:02	22:01	8:18	15:18	62:29

Readers may be wondering if Melles has hacked bits out of the symphony to get through it in such record time, but no, it is complete.

A few general points emerge. Melles, though an extreme case, belongs to a tradition of brisk Bruckner which prevailed in the first half of the 20th century – when he was rarely played outside Austria – and which was displaced by the mystical view that held listeners in thrall post-war. Volkmar Andreae’s Vienna radio cycle is probably the completest testimony to the old brisk tradition, though Klemperer was close to it until his final period. Rückwardt and Venzago show that some recent conductors have wished to recapture it³¹.

But what does it actually sound like? Well, I have to judge it from an off-air cassette from the 1990s that suffers from severe dynamic compression. Despite this, there is more dynamic shading than in the Schubert Fourth I have discussed. There also seems little doubt that Melles often had his strings dig in with a full tone where the score seems to imply something more withdrawn. Nevertheless, the orchestra can be described as responsive, if rough and ready. One would like to judge this interpretation under better circumstances, but the orchestra is not a serious drawback and, as I explain below, there may be a positive side to it.

I think it would not cross the mind of anyone who had never heard or played this symphony, that this might not be the normal way of playing it. Everything flows and lilts naturally, without any sense that it is being hustled along. The textures are full but lean. What we hear is a very Austrian-sounding post-Schubertian symphony. There is not a hint of mysticism, but the unsuspecting listener would not imagine there should be. Maybe there should not.

“Anyone who had never heard or played this symphony” is not so fanciful in Milan in 1987. Listeners who had not sought it out on records might have heard it at La Scala on 10 or 11 October 1985, when it was conducted by Gianandrea Gavazzeni. I have no information about this interpretation, but I know

³¹ Not all, though. While I was preparing this article, a review appeared on MWI of a performance under Rémy Ballot that goes the whole hog in the opposite direction, lasting 69:08 - http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2017/Jun/Bruckner_sy6_99127.htm. Melles could have played the first movement twice and still finished with ten minutes to spare, compared with Ballot.

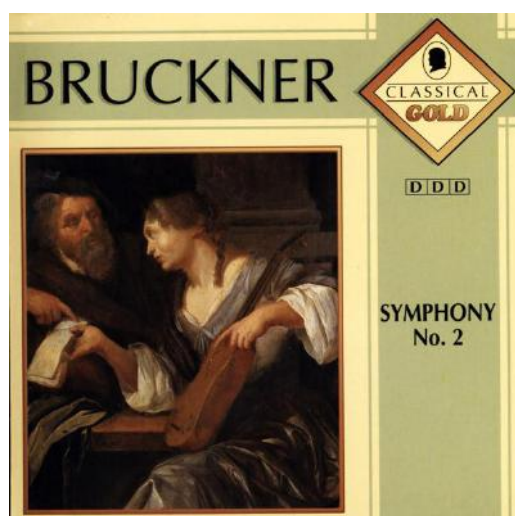
Gavazzeni's interpretation of Bruckner 2, and he certainly did not dawdle over that one. Nor do I have any information about previous performances by the Milan RAI Symphony orchestra. RAI's work-in-progress site as of now has only incomplete listings for Turin. This shows that Turiners – and radio listeners – heard it in 1948 (Gavazzeni), 1954 (Kubelik), 1958 (Hindemith – does this survive?) and 1967 (Lee Schaenen). Nothing else is listed until 1997 (Chailly). The odds are, therefore, that most of the audience had little prior knowledge of the symphony, and that the orchestra itself was not aware it was asked to do anything unusual.

Furthermore, anyone who looked at the score would not have supposed this might not be the "proper" way to play the symphony. Bruckner marked the first movement "Majestic" with 2 half-notes to the bar and the Finale "Agitated but not too fast" with 2 half-notes to the bar. If you didn't "know" that in Bruckner this doesn't mean what it says, you would logically choose tempi similar to those of Melles. Melles' Adagio could be thought perilously close to an Andante in Brucknerian terms, but it would be a reasonable pace for an adagio in Schubert, maybe even in Brahms. Why, in all truth, should adagio mean one thing in Schubert, more or less the same in Brahms, and about half that speed in Bruckner?

I have dwelt on Melles' Bruckner 6 because I find it a more convincing demonstration of his Bruckner methods than the 1977 **Second** with the Austrian Radio Symphony Orchestra. This has been reissued on various occasions, not always under Melles' own name³². This, too, is the fastest of Berky's listings apart from a live Scherchen which notoriously has a cut finale. But the question is, what do they all play? Melles does not make cuts of his own initiative, but he makes all those indicated in the Haas score and omits second repeats in the Scherzo and Trio. Berky has noted this, but for many of the listed recordings he makes no particular comment. The default assumption is that no comment means no cuts, but a check on the 1953 Volkmar Andreae recording shows that he makes exactly the same omissions as Melles – and takes a mere 19 seconds longer. So, without a check on what the others play or don't play, the timings do not tell us much. Opening the cuts and taking the repeats would add at least 5 minutes, at identical speeds. I list, therefore, only Melles, Andreae and Gavazzeni.

	I	II	III	IV	TT
Melles ORF 1977	15:21	14:14	7:57	13:13	50:46
Andreae VSO 1953	15:49	13:26	7:57	13:51	51:05
Gavazzeni RAI Roma 1988	16:38	13:23	6:05	15:04	51:11

For much of the time, Melles and Andreae sound remarkably similar. In the first movement, Andreae allows slight relaxation in second subject territory, which Melles does not, and his Finale is a tad slower most of the time. Melles gets a better recording, but not so much so as you would reasonably expect given the years that have passed. On the whole, Andreae is more convincing. The Melles has a hustled feel which Andreae's does not, even at the same speeds, and which Melles' Sixth did not. Back in 1953, Andreae was probably not asking anything unusual of his players, and he was after all a well-known Brucknerian factor in Vienna. By 1977, mystic Bruckner was the norm everywhere and Melles very likely encountered an instinctive resistance from the



³² Correctly attributed issues include Classical Gold CLG 079. Go here for John Berky's identification of a performance supposedly by Hans Zanotelli as this one under Melles: <https://www.abruckner.com/editorsnote/discographichorror/>.

orchestra. Hence the impression that he is driving them on willy-nilly.

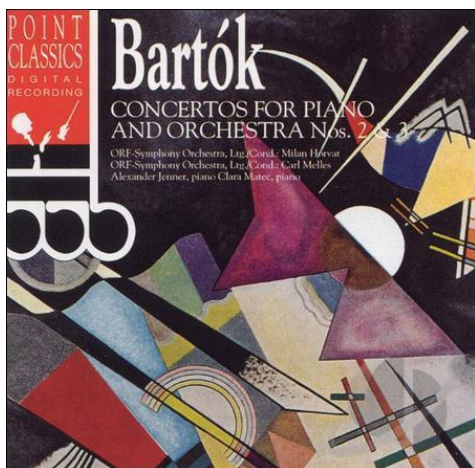
The moral would seem to be that if, in the late 20th century, you wanted to give brisk, upfront Bruckner, with outer movements beaten in two not in four – as per the scores – it was better to do it with an orchestra that had no particular Bruckner tradition. Up to a point, many of the positive qualities of Melles' Milan Sixth re-emerge in the Second that Gavazzeni conducted with the RAI Rome orchestra on 27 February 1988. This is Gavazzeni in his "man with a mission" mood, but he clearly does not expect us to enquire too deeply into details and dynamic shading, any more than he did. Maybe there just was not time for more than a grand sight-reading session, since the concert had begun with Salviucci's *Alceste*, which cannot have been easy. Within these limits, the performance makes sense of its tempi, more than Melles' did, I suspect because no one in the orchestra actually questioned the approach. They just were not very well prepared to bring it off. Gavazzeni does not make the indicated cuts – so actually his outer movements go at about the same tempi as Melles', and his Adagio flows pretty fast. He does not even give first repeats in the Scherzo and Trio, and is brusquely energetic with what is left. As fuel to the argument for taking Bruckner's 2-in-a-bar indications at their face value, then, the performance makes its point, but only as a might-have-been.

Before leaving Melles' work in Milan, we might note that he conducted at least three premières of works by contemporary Italian composers: *Overture* by Gilberto Bosco (3 December 1986), *Intermezzo notturno* by Lorenzo Ferrero (1986) and *Flag* by Franco Donatoni (9 May 1987). At least two of these were played, not by the RAI orchestra, but by CARME – Società Italiana di Musica da Camera Montedison, a long-abandoned reminder of the days when major industries could also act as cultural catalysts.

In the update to my article on Vladimir Delman I tried to outline the Milan RAI orchestra's experience of Mahler performance pre-Delman. I noted that Melles seemed to be little interested in this composer. In truth, as it now emerges, he had conducted the Fifth and the Eighth with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. He also conducted *Das Lied von der Erde* at the "Settimane Musicali Gustav Mahler" at Dobbiaco on 26 July 1988, with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Trento e Bolzano. I have not been able to trace the soloists. This does not sound like a man uninterested in Mahler, but no RAI performances are known to me. In any case, since the RAI had Riccardo Chailly direct the orchestra in symphonies 8, 2, 5 and 6, one a year from 1986 to 1989, there would not seem to have been much space for major initiatives by their principal conductor.

After Milan

Melles continues to crop up in the Italian annals until at least 1994, when he conducted an open-air Mendelssohn concert in the Parco dei Daini of Rome on 20 July. Stefan Milenkovic played the Violin Concerto while sopranos Francesca Pedaci and Annarita Taliento joined the Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* music. This was part of a summer season put on by Rome Opera.



Two CDs issued by Point Classics in 1994 and supposedly newly recorded, saw Melles back with the ORF SO. I say "supposedly" since on each disc, Melles and Milan Horvat conducted one work each. The soloist in **Bartók's Second and Third Piano Concertos**, of which the latter was led by Melles, was **Alexander Jenner**. The other CD coupled **Honegger's Third Symphony** under Melles with Hindemith's "Mathis der Maler" Symphony under Horvat. Horvat had been Chief Conductor of the ORF SO from 1969 to 1975 while, as we have seen, Melles' conducted them regularly during the 1970s. Alexander Jenner's

performance of Brahms' Second Concerto, with the Vienna Volksoper Orchestra under Dean Dixon, rightly enjoys cult status and was made in the early 1960s. The combination of names, therefore, suggests older recordings, maybe taken from Vienna Radio archives.

However, the curriculums of all concerned show that an "ORF old boys' reunion" such as this in 1994 was perfectly possible. I have traced performances by Jenner till the mid-1980s, but he was still adjudicating competitions in the first years of the present century. The ORF SO itself took its present name of Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra in 1996. Horvat's career did not end in 1975 – he was conductor of the Graz Symphony Orchestra from 1997 to 2000. As we know, Melles was still conducting in 1994. We must therefore assume that these discs offer a late example of his work.

Some interpreters have emphasized the romantic leanings of Bartók's relatively mellow late Third Piano Concerto. Jenner, in the outer movements, brings steely clarity, brittle tone – closely recorded – and abrasive authority. Pedalling is kept to the minimum. This would have worked better if a conductor like Pierre Boulez had provided the same sort of razor-like precision on the orchestra. Melles is attentive to his soloist, but the orchestral strings have a spongy attack compared with the piano, and the wind soloists provide a shapely cantabile for their melodies. This in itself can be a fine way to play Bartók, but as it is, soloist and orchestra seem to belong to different performances.

The central movement, however, is quite something. At the beginning, Melles provides a too-easy Mendelssohnian flow, but Jenner establishes the proper air of deep but not emotive contemplation. In the central section, there is a true collaboration at last, as soloist and orchestra combine to produce something light-years away from the Respighi-like fountain music that often emerges. It is worth having the performance just for this.

In **Honegger's Symphony no. 3 – "Liturgique"**, Melles gives a hard-hitting performance of considerable impact. There is also a fine intensity in the central movement, but he might have taken the epilogue a little more broadly. Here, the version under George Tzipine that I discussed in my article on that conductor achieves greater atmosphere and eloquence, but Melles often packs a greater punch elsewhere. If not especially memorable, the performance testifies to Melles as a capable exponent of mid-stream 20th century composers. The ORF SO was not a world-class band – a flute solo in the epilogue ought to have been remade.

In 1995, Melles received the Great Silver Medal of the Republic of Austria. This came as the crown to a number previous awards and recognitions. He had been made an Honorary Member of the Vienna Singakademie in 1978 and had received the Brahms Medal of the Vienna Singverein in 1983.

Also in 1995, Melles was appointed Honorary Conductor of the **Braunschweig (Brunswick) State Orchestra**. The occasion was marked with a **live cycle of the Beethoven Symphonies**, issued on the orchestra's own label. Soloists in the Ninth were **Johanna Cortés** (soprano), **Michelle Breedt** (mezzo-Soprano), **Norbert Orth** (tenor), **Franz Grundheber** (bass). They were joined by the **Chor & Extrachor des Staatstheaters Braunschweig**, **Studiochor Braunschweig** and the **Sine Nomine Chor Braunschweig**. I have been able to hear Symphonies 1, 2 and 9.

The Braunschweig State Orchestra is one of the oldest in the world, founded in 1587, and has had some distinguished names among its conductors. It has nevertheless never made any particular international mark. It has been producing its own recordings since 1988 – surely one of the first orchestras with an "own label"? – but has still remained in the shadows. Nevertheless, Melles has a solid band in front of him, and there is more dynamic shading that we heard in his Milan Schubert Fourth.

For Britishers, Brunswick probably still evokes Robert Browning's *Pied Piper of Hamelin* – "In Hamelin town in Brunswick ..." – and its stuffy, fat-cat Mayor and Corporation. Certainly, that Mayor and Corporation would not have called Melles and his orchestra to explain themselves in their august presence. I am in two minds about this First Symphony. For a 1995 performance, it inhabits a time-warp, albeit one going back to about 1900 rather than 1800 when the symphony was new. There is nothing here of the firebrand Beethoven bursting out of traditional moulds. This is Beethoven of fixed certainties. And yet, there is a certain likeable timelessness about it. Tempi are steady, never too fast for comfortable articulation and clear inner detail, textures are full and rounded. With every repeat – including the first-time scherzo repeat after the trio – it stretches to 31 minutes. Still, Beethoven seems big enough to accommodate even this unchallenging view.

The introduction to the Second Symphony gathers a certain tension in its stately progress. This is rather lost as the Allegro starts with little real profile. The only gain at this slow tempo is that the triplets towards the end of the development section fall easily into place, but did Beethoven mean them to sound so comfortable? The second subject sounds rather pompous at this tempo.

The second movement goes very nicely. It is not so slow as to impede flow; indeed, everything fits into place very well. The scherzo and finale, though, are too much like an 18th century serenade, *Hausmusik* for bewigged patrons. The alarums and excursions in the trio must surely shock – everyone here seems to know all too well what is coming. In the finale, some might welcome the opportunity to hear the notes clearly, but the downside is that it does not spin. The stopping and starting towards the end does not make sense if a terrific momentum has not built up before it happens. I also found myself reflecting that, while Melles' tuttis have a certain fullness, it is a reassuring, comfortable fullness far removed from the sort of fiery blaze with which a Klemperer could have made sense of these tempi. So, while I found the First Symphony convincing in its amiable way, by the time of the Second Symphony, Beethoven was already writing music too challenging to allow for an unchallenging performance of it. All repeats are played.

As for the Ninth, it takes more than good intentions to drag down Beethoven's inspiration, if indeed anything can. In the first movement, all 17:37 of it, Melles perhaps looked for a tempo at which the suddenly scurrying 32nd-notes would have unfazed no one, and worked it from there. The music proceeds with a certain majestic steadiness and, while the conductor never pushes, he does not actually drag. Some static moments seem inevitable at this tempo. Likewise in the Scherzo (16:21 with repeats), the tempo chosen seems to be that at which the hammering dotted rhythms of the secondary material will remain clear. It is not too slow to dance, and has an agreeably pastoral trio, but if you're looking for the daemonic, or for vehemence, with a promise of light beyond the horizon in the trio, then this is not the place to go. The slow movement is actually not all that slow (13:34) and has an attractive, flowing grace. However, the dramatic outburst towards the end goes for little and the conductor's refusal to countenance drama or rhetoric means that the final pages have limited sense – lyrical songfulness is just not enough.

A goodly number of choirs are named for the finale and the unflappable but convinced approach has a suggestion of a community sing-song to it, with no one stretched beyond their limits. Following the previous pattern, tempi are broad but without getting stuck or sentimental in the slower parts. The bass soloist is distinguished, the tenor a little husky, the two ladies reliable – this was well before Michelle Breedt rose to her present eminence.

This all sounds pretty dismal, but Beethoven can mean many things to many men. In its way, and assuming symphonies 3-8 fit the pattern, this is a unique cycle. I referred above to a time-warp, but I would go further. It is as though a group of Austro-German musicians had been stranded on a desert island around

1870 with enough wives and family to ensure future generations, with their instruments and with scores and parts to the Beethoven Symphonies. Our putative castaways then lived, through several generations, to our own days, oblivious of the changing world outside their own horizons. The highlight of their year was an annual get-together to play through the Beethoven Symphonies, mindful of their father's lessons, careful to carry the torch and blissfully unaware that these symphonies could have any larger meaning than the one known to them. You would have supposed it impossible that such a circumscribed, provincial approach could have still been possible in 1995. Braunschweig is, after all, a city about 3 hours' drive from Berlin, 2-and-a-half from Leipzig. The digital age was well advanced and the challenging interpretations of these works by Furtwängler and Karajan, let alone Harnoncourt and the HIP-sters, were appallingly available, as Constant Lambert might have put it, in every record shop. So let us doff our caps to the brave little Brunswickers, not entirely ironically. It must have needed far more courage to play Beethoven this way in 1995 than to present a Karajan clone.

In 1996, Melles retired to Vienna for reasons of health. No reference has emerged to any further conducting activities. He died in Vienna on 25 April 2004. His funeral took place on May 12 at the Hietzing cemetery.

Concluding thoughts

Like several other musicians in the "Forgotten Artists" series, Melles' life was disrupted by war and consequent divisions in Europe. An exile from his own country, he appears to have sought a new Austrian musical identity for himself, basing his repertoire around the Austro-German classics. Even his choice of contemporary composers – despite the occasional foray into Britten, Dallapiccola and Ligeti – was strongly Austrian-oriented. He was rewarded with several major recognitions from his second homeland and was a constant presence in Austrian musical life.

He remained, however, a secondary figure. An all-too-consistent career pattern emerges whereby he reached the highest ranking podiums – the Vienna Philharmonic, the Berlin Philharmonic, Bayreuth, the New Philharmonia, the Orchestre de Paris, La Scala – but never established a permanent relationship with any of them. Longer-standing relations came about with the Vienna Symphony orchestra, the ORF (Austrian Radio) Symphony Orchestra, the Milan RAI Symphony Orchestra and the Braunschweig State Orchestra. This may mean that he was good, but rubbed people up the wrong way so, having got to the top rung of the ladder, was not asked back. It may equally mean that he knew how to rub people up, so he got to the top rung, but then did not conduct well enough to be invited again. The 1966 comment already quoted by the unidentified Italian critic "V." may sum it up: "he seemed inclined to curb impulses and smooth the contours more than necessary. A taste for full, sonorous and modern timbres nonetheless enabled him to obtain frequently admirable results from the orchestra". In other words, he prepared things nicely, but when the concert came, he did not provide the sort of challenge and inspiration that a top-class orchestra expects. But, as against this, I also remember a review in an Italian paper, commenting on his 1986 Schubert cycle, in which he was described as a "geniaccio" (or "genialaccio", I forget which) with a rather endearing podium manner. Either of the two words might be translated as "crazy genius". This is not the impression that comes across from his performances, though.

All the same, curiosity must be aroused by a conductor who can stretch Beethoven's Second to over 39 minutes and whip through Bruckner's Sixth in less than 47. Melles' insistence on the centrality of the Austro-German classics seems to have led to a vision of them as a single unity. In other words, Allegro in two means the same thing in Bruckner as it does in Beethoven or Schubert. Likewise Adagio or Andante. So, in his hands, the first movements of Schubert's Fourth and Bruckner's Sixth go at about the same speed. Since most other conductors think that Allegro in two means something completely different in Bruckner as compared with Schubert, though their justification for this lies in their innate feelings, not in historical facts,

the result is that Melles conducted the first movement of Schubert Four slower than most other conductors, and the first movement of Bruckner Six much faster. One is bound to wonder how this worked out over the wider range of the Austro-German classics. As things stand, we have no Mozart or Haydn Symphonies from Melles, Beethoven mainly from late in his career, a certain amount of Schubert, no Brahms, a little Bruckner and no Mahler. Probably the combined Austrian Radio and RAI archives could fill many of these gaps. The question is, how interesting would it actually be?



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Appendix 1: Carl Melles and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra

Melles conducted at least one concert with the VSO every year from 1963 to 1984, except 1982, totalling 140 concerts. Given that most programmes were given between twice and five times, this amounts to 58 actual programmes.

Information from the VSO's searchable database.

3-4-5.1.1963, 19.30, Wiener Konzerthaus, Great Hall

Brahms: Piano Concerto no. 1 (soloist: Wilhelm Kempff)

Beethoven: Symphony No. 7

19-20-21-22-23.11.1963, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Kodaly: Hary Janos Suite

Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto (soloist: Shmuel Ashkenasi)

Brahms: Symphony no. 4

22.1.1964, 19.30, Wiener Konzerthaus, Great Hall

Brahms: Eine Deutsches Requiem (Evelyn Lear, soprano, Thomas Stewart, baritone, Josef Nebois, organ, Wiener Singakademie)

28-29-30.10.1964, 19.30, Wiener Konzerthaus, Great Hall

Weber: Oberon Overture

Beethoven: Violin Concerto (soloist: Josef Suk)

Einem: Symphonic Scenes op.22

Stravinsky: Suite no. 2

25.4.1965, 11.00, Funkhaus Argentinierstraße Wien

Bartók: Divertimento

Piano Concerto no. 3 (soloist: István Antal)

Kodaly: Peacock Variations

Liszt: Les Préludes

14.11.1965, 11.00, Funkhaus Argentinierstraße Wien

Martin, Frank: Passacaglia

Grieg: Piano Concerto (soloist: Alexander Jenner)

Brahms: Symphony no. 2

9-10.3.1966, 19.30, Wiener Konzerthaus, Great Hall
Schumann: Manfred Overture
Bartók: Violin Concerto no. 2 (soloist: Edith Peinemann)
Dvořák: Symphony 9

15.1.1967, 11.00, Funkhaus Argentinierstraße Wien
Stravinsky: Pulcinella Suite
Chopin: Piano Concerto no. 2 (soloist: Rudolf Buchbinder)
Mozart: Symphony no. 39

24.11.1967, 19.30, Wiener Konzerthaus, Great Hall
Beethoven: Coriolan
Violin Concerto (Edith Peinemann)
Symphony no. 6 "Pastoral"

3 & 5.1.1968, 19.30, Wiener Konzerthaus, Great Hall
Beethoven: Leonora no. 3
Piano Concerto no. 3 (soloist: Annie Fischer)
Symphony no. 1

24-25-26.1.1968, 19.30, Wiener Konzerthaus, Great Hall
Beethoven: Prometheus Overture
Piano Concerto no. 3 (soloist: Friedrich Gulda)
Symphony no. 4

14-15-16.2.1968, 19.30, Wiener Konzerthaus, Great Hall
Beethoven: Fidelio Overture
Symphony no. 8
Symphony no. 7

6-7-8.3.1968, 19.30, Wiener Konzerthaus, Great Hall
Beethoven: Egmont Overture
Piano Concerto no. 4 (soloist not named, or was Melles also the soloist?)
Symphony no. 2

27-28-29.3.1968, 19.30, Wiener Konzerthaus, Great Hall
Beethoven: 11 "Mödlinger" Dances
Piano Concerto no. 2 (soloist: Bruno-Leonardo Gelber)
Symphony no. 5

17-18-19.4.1968, 19.30, Wiener Konzerthaus, Great Hall
Beethoven: King Stephen Overture
Piano Concerto no. 1 (soloist: Rudolf Buchbinder)
Symphony no. 3 "Eroica"

8-9-10-11.10.1968, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall
Debussy: Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune
Mozart: Piano Concerto no. 24 K491 (soloist not named: Melles?)
Dvořák: Symphony no. 9

16-17.11.1968, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Britten: War Requiem (Heather Harper, soprano, Peter Schreier, tenor, Gerd Nienstedt, baritone, Wiener Sängerknaben, Singverein der Gesellschaft der Musikfreude)

14.12.1969, 11.00, Funkhaus Argentinierstraße Wien

Bach: Brandenburg Concerto no. 3

Henze: Ariosi (soloists: Irmgard Seefried, soprano, Wolfgang Schneiderhan, violin)

Kodály: Symphony no.1 (sic)

3-4-5-6-7.2.1970, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Beethoven: Violin Concerto (soloist: György Pauk)

Ligeti: Lontano

Franck: Symphony

28.2. & 1.3.1970, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Mahler: Symphony no. 8 (soloists: Helen Donath, Agnes Giebel, sopranos, Margarita Lolowa, Ingrid Mayr, contraltos, Peter Schreier, tenor, Ernst Gerold Gramm, baritone, Tugomir Franc, bass, Rudolf Schiolz, organ, Wiener Sängerknaben, ORF-Choir, Singverein der Gesellschaft der Musikfreude)

23.5.1970, 20.30, Wiener Rathaus, Rathaus Wien Festsaal

National Anthem of Austria

Beethoven: Ritterballet

Strauss J. II: An der schönen blauen Donau

31.5.1970, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Schmidt: Das Buch mit sieben Siegeln (soloist: Gerlinde Lorenz, soprano, Ingrid Mayr, contralto, Theo Altmeyer, Franz Lukasovsky, tenors, Reid Bunger, Ernst Gerold Schramm, basses, Karl Richter, organ, Singverein der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde)

3-4-5-6.3.1971, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Mozart: 2-piano Concerto in E flat K.365 (soloists: Jörg Demus, Norman Shetler)

Mahler: Symphony no. 5

25.4 & 9.5.1971, 11.00, Funkhaus Argentinierstraße Wien

Corelli: Concerto Grosso op.3/8

Vogel, Ernst: Cello Concerto (soloist: Vladimir Orloff)

Tchaikovsky: Symphony no. 5

12.8.1971, 20.30, Bregenz

Corelli: Concerto Grosso op.6/2

Schubert: Mass no. 6 in E flat (soloists: Margherita Rinaldi, soprano, Biancamaria Casoni, mezzo-soprano, Adolf Dallapozza, Frédéric Mayer, tenors, Enrico Fissore, bass, Konzertvereinigung Wiener Staatsopernchor)

4, 6-7.11.1971, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Brahms: Ein Deutsches Requiem (soloists: Edith Mathis, soprano, Wolfgang Annheisser, baritone, Singverein der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde)

21.11.1971, 11.00, Funkhaus Argentinierstraße Wien

Mozart: piano Concerto no. 9 K.271 (soloist: Rudolf Buchbinder)
Bruckner: Symphony no. 3

30.1.1972, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall
Schubert: Symphony no. 5
Schubert-Liszt: Wanderer Fantasy (soloist: Lennart Rabes)
Schubert: Symphony no. 1

3-4-5-6.5.1972, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall
Beethoven: Piano Concerto no. 4 (soloist: Bruce Hungerford)
Ligeti: Melodies for Orchestra (1971)
Schumann: Symphony no. 4

22-23-24-25.11.1972, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall
Brahms: Violin Concerto (soloist: Mayumi Fujikawa)
Wellesz: Symphony no. 9 (Wellesz site says 22/11 was first performance)
Strauss, R: Don Juan

3.12.1972, 11.00, Funkhaus Argentinierstraße Wien
Programme not given

21.10.1973, 11.00, Funkhaus Argentinierstraße Wien
Dvořák: Violin Concerto (soloist: Nilla Pierrou)
Schmidt, Franz: Symphony no. 4

7-8-9-10.2.1974, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall
Beethoven: Piano Concerto no. 4 (soloist: Joseph Kalichstein)
Choral Fantasia (soloist: Norman Shetler, Singverein der Gesellschaft der Musikfreude)
Symphony no. 6 "Pastoral"

2-3-4-5-6.4.1975, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall
Blacher: Fantasia for orchestra op.51
Mendelssohn: Piano Concerto no. 1 (soloist: David Bar-Illan)
Schubert: Symphony no. 9 in C

3.4.1975, 9.30, WIG-Halle Wien Wien
Austrian National Anthem
Mozart: 6 German Dances K.509
European Anthem (from Beethoven: Symphony no. 9)

11.5.1975, 11.00, Funkhaus Argentinierstraße Wien
Vogel, Ernst: Programm für orchestra (1974)
Szymanowski: "Piesni Muezzina Szalonego" op. 42 (soloist: Rotraud Hansmann)
"Słopewnie" op.46 (soloist: Rotraud Hansmann)
Beethoven: Symphony no. 4

6.11.1975, 20.00, Feldkirch
Einem, Gottfried von: Orchestral Music no. 1 op. 9 (1948)
Glazunov: Violin Concerto (soloist: Josef Sivó)

Schumann: Symphony no. 4

7.11.1975, 9.30, Feldkirch

Beethoven: "Die Weihe des Hauses"

Mozart: Six German Dances K. 509

National Anthem of Austria

Anthem of Vorarlberg (Anton Schmutzer)

11-12-13-14-15.11.1975, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Rubin, Marcel: Symphony no. 6

Glazunov: Violin Concerto (soloist: Josef Sivó)

Schumann: Symphony no. 4

14.3.1976, 11.00, Funkhaus Argentinierstraße Wien

Bialas, Günter: Meyerbeer-Paraphrasen (1971)

Martin, Frank: Piano Concerto no. 2 (soloist: Paul Badura-Skoda)

Beethoven: Symphony no. 6 "Pastorale"

28-29.4.1976, 19.30, Wiener Konzerthaus, Great Hall

Haydn: The Seasons (soloists: Felicity Palmer, soprano, Claes H. Ahnsjö, tenor, Helmut Berger-Tuna, bass, Wiener Singakademie)

2-3-4-5 & 7.12.1976, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Bartók: 2 Portraits (soloist not named)

Weber-Liszt: Konzertstück op.79 (soloist: Rudolf Buchbinder)

Prokofiev: Piano Concerto no. 1 (soloist: Rudolf Buchbinder)

Beethoven: Symphony no. 5

Strauss, Johann II: Der Fledermaus Overture

11-12-13.12.1976, Haus der Begegnung Floridsdorf Wien (11), Musikverein Wien, Great Hall (12-13)

Beethoven: Piano Concerto no. 5 (soloist: Rudolf Buchbinder)

Symphony no. 3 "Eroica"

27.2.1977, 11.00, Funkhaus Argentinierstraße Wien

Haydn: Symphony no. 1

Kraft, Anton: Cello Concerto op. 4 (soloist: Wilfried Rehm)

Schmidt, Franz: Symphony no. 1

9-10.3.1977, 19.30, Wiener Konzerthaus, Great Hall

Martinu: Field Mass (soloist: Václav Zítek, Prague male Chorus)

Dvořák: Symphony no. 9

12-13.10.1977, 19.30, Wiener Konzerthaus, Great Hall

Beethoven: Leonora no. 3

Piano Concerto no. 4 (soloist: John O'Conor)

Symphony no. 7

23-24.11.1977, 19.30, Wiener Konzerthaus, Great Hall

Beethoven: King Stephen Overture

Symphony no. 8

Mass in C (soloist: Eva Andor, soprano, Gertrude Jahn, contralto, Adalbert Kraus, tenor, Artur Korn, bass, Wiener Singakademie)

13.3.1978, 11.00, Heldenplatz Wien

Beethoven: Egmont Overture

National Anthem of Austria

2.6.1978, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Schmidt, Franz: Symphony no. 2

Schubert: Mass no. 2 (soloists: Jane Marsh, soprano, Ottavio Garaventa, tenor, Artur Korn, bass, Wiener Jeunesse Chor)

23-24-25-26.11.1978, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Berger, Theodor: Symphonic Triglyph "Drei Fenster", metamorphoses for orchestra, based on themes by Franz Schubert (1978)

Hindemith: Cello Concerto (soloist: Angelica May)

Dvořák: Symphony no. 9 "New World"

5-67.12.1979, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Beethoven: Symphony No. 4

Symphony No. 6 "Pastorale"

13-14-15-16.2.1980, 19:30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Brahms: Variations on a theme of Haydn

Grieg: Piano Concerto (soloist: Shura Cherkassky)

Schubert: Symphony no. 5

26-27-28-29.11.1980, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto (soloist: Elmar Oliveira)

Beethoven: Symphony no. 5

22.2.1981, 11.00, Funkhaus Argentinierstraße Wien

Haydn: Symphony No. 6 in D major Hob. I:6 "Le matin" ("The Morning)

Giuliani: Guitar Concerto no.1 (soloist: Leo Witoszynskij)

Bartok: Suite No. 2 for chamber orchestra op. 4 Sz 34

23-24-25-26.4.1981, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Beethoven: Violin Concerto (soloist: Wolfgang Schneiderhan)

Schubert: Symphony no. 4

13-14-15-16.1.1983, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Bruckner: Symphony no. 8

26.10.1983, 11.00, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall

Bruckner: Symphony no. 4

1-2-3-4.3.1984, 19.30, Musikverein Wien, Great Hall
Beethoven: Violin Concerto (soloist: Edith Peinemann)
Symphony no. 3 "Eroica"

Appendix 2: Carl Melles and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
Information from the VPO's searchable database.

30 May 1965, Konzerthaus Vienna, Vienna Festival Weeks
Beethoven: Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus, op. 43 - Overture
Symphony no. 1
Symphony no. 3 "Eroica"

20 November 1966, Stadthalle Wien, Concert of the City of Vienna
Beethoven: Egmont Overture
Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto (soloist: Josef Sivo)
Beethoven: Symphony No. 4

4 June 1967, Konzerthaus Vienna, Vienna Festival Weeks
Beethoven: Coriolan
Goldmark: Violin Concerto (soloist: Nathan Milstein)
Beethoven: Symphony No. 7

9 January 1970 (Jeunesse Concert), 10-11 January 1970 (6th Subscription Concert)
Reger: Variations and Fugue on a theme by Mozart
Beethoven: Symphony no. 6 "Pastorale"