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# ARG

**American Record Guide**

## **Cotrubas, Giulini At Work on Rigoletto**



**Musical Theater Survey—Central Europe  
Riccardo Muti—Two New Recordings**

**DVOŘÁK: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in A Minor, Op. 53; Romance for Violin and Orchestra in F Minor, Op. 11**

Salvatore Accardo, violin; Concertgebouw Orchestra (Amsterdam), Colin Davis, conductor  
Philips 9500 406, \$9.98

Dvořák's violin concerto has never seemed to enjoy the same popularity as its counterpart for cello. This is not easy to understand, given its attractive lyricism spiced with rhythmic vigor and the piquancy of the Czech character of much of the music. There are only five versions currently listed in *Schwann* and in the past the work has

17

lacked the advocacy, on record, of many of the greater violinists, including Heifetz for whom the music would seem to have been ideally suited.

The most interesting feature of this new performance is that Accardo gives a performance that is more impassioned than those we have heard from him on past recordings. Perhaps it is for this reason that his playing is not as polished as usual, though his silken, high-strung tone is still much in evidence. The recorded sound lacks impact and the performance is accompanied by heavy breathing from Accardo and by what sounds like muted grunting from Davis.

Despite the attractions of Accardo's playing and the gorgeous tone of the Concertgebouw, this new recording is moot since there is still available the recording of this work by Josef Suk—Dvořák's greatgrandson—that has never been surpassed. Suk is accompanied by the Czech Philharmonic conducted by Ančerl on Quintessence PMC-7112. The sound on this twenty-year-old recording is detailed and spacious—noticeably better, in fact, than on the new Philips release. And the Quintessence is little more than half the price of the Philips.

The *Romance*, Op. 11 is also Suk's filler. Accardo gives a polished performance, but one that does little to alter preference for the Suk disc.

The liner notes on the Philips disc are given short shrift and there is no information whatsoever concerning the recording itself: a disgraceful presentation. At half the price Quintessence provides good notes and full information regarding the recording, including the original recording location and date in 1960. Bravo!

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18