

WETA FM

Washington D.C.

CD PICK OF THE WEEK for July 25, 2011

Symphonies by Robert Schumann and Hans Gál

---



Week of July 25, 2011

Another world première recording of a Hans Gál symphony, this week paired with a familiar work by Robert Schumann.

Hans Gál, who was born in Vienna in 1890 and died in Edinburgh in 1987, experienced first-hand most of the 20th century's musical development. His own music, at first considerably influenced by Brahms, became a clear, individualistic voice early in the century, and remained unique amidst the explorations of the Second Viennese School and twelve-tone techniques. Dismissed by the Nazis from his position as director of the Conservatory in Mainz in 1933, he eventually immigrated to Scotland and spent the remainder of his life there with his wife, Hanna, to whom he was married for 65 years.

This week we have the latest world première recording of a symphony by this temporarily-forgotten composer. The Symphony No. 3 was written in 1951, a purely creative endeavor that was not commissioned.

A better-known work joins Gál's symphony here: the Symphony No. 3 by Robert Schumann, known as the "Rhenish," although this was not the composer's subtitle. In fact it's thought to have been inspired in part by the magnificence of the Cologne Cathedral.

The performances are by Stratford-Upon-Avon's Orchestra of the Swan, conducted by Principal Guest Conductor Kenneth Woods. This American maestro is known to Washingtonians as one of the National Conducting Institute's participants in 2001. He was music director of the Oregon East Symphony in the first decade of the millennium; there, he produced the "Redneck Mahler" cycle.