

BRUNO WALTER

RARE POLYDOR ACOUSTIC RECORDINGS

BERLIN STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA



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TCHAIKOVSKY - SYMPHONY NO. 6, "PATHÉTIQUE"
PLUS MUSIC BY MOZART AND BIZET

BERLIN STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, RECORDED 1924-5



- 1 MOZART: Così fan tutte - Overture (4:21)
- 2 MOZART: Idomeneo - Overture (4:49)
- 3 BIZET: Carmen - Intermezzo, Act 3 (3:07)
- 4 BIZET: Carmen - Prelude, Act 4 (2:33)

TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 6 in B minor, "Pathétique", Op. 74

- 5 1st mvt. - Adagio - Allegro non troppo (18:24)
- 6 2nd mvt. - Allegro con grazia (8:08)
- 7 3rd mvt. - Allegro molto vivace (8:43)
- 8 4th mvt. - Adagio lamentoso - Andante (9:30)

Tracks 1-4 recorded in 1924 (tk 4 poss. 1923), tracks 5-8 recorded in 1925

Issued as Polydor 78s, Cat Nos: 66027 (1, 2); 65954 (3, 4); 66332, 66336 (5-8, also issued on Polydor 69771, 69775)
Matrix numbers: 646 az, 649 az, 1517as, 69 az (tracks 1-4)
1918 as, 1634as, 1919as, 1641 1/2 as, 1920as, 1921as, 1730as, 1751as, 1642as, 1643 1/2as (tracks 5-8)

Transfer and remastering by Ward Marston, January 2009

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Bruno Walter, c1930

Total duration: 59:35 ©2009 Pristine Audio.

Bruno Walter's pre-war conducting career

In 1896, Bruno Schlesinger took a conducting position at the opera house in Breslau – a job found for him by Mahler. The conductor recorded that the director of this theater, Theodor Loewe, required that before taking up this position he change his name of Schlesinger, which literally means Silesian, "because of its frequent occurrence in the capital of Silesia", although other sources attribute the change to a desire to make his name sound less Jewish. (Note: It is often stated that Walter was his middle name and he merely dropped the surname Schlesinger. This is not true; he had no middle name and "Walter" had never been one of his names.) In 1897, he took an opera-conducting position at Pressburg, and in 1898 he took one in Riga, Latvia. Then Walter returned in 1900 to Berlin, where he assumed the post of Royal Prussian Conductor at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, succeeding Franz Schalk; his colleagues there included Richard Strauss and Karl Muck. While in Berlin he also conducted the premiere of *Der arme Heinrich* by Hans Pfitzner, who became a lifelong friend.

In 1901 Walter accepted Mahler's invitation to be his assistant at the Court Opera in Vienna. Walter led Verdi's *Aida* at his debut. In the following years Walter's conducting reputation soared as he was invited to conduct across Europe – in Prague, in London where in 1910 he conducted *Tristan und Isolde* and Ethel Smyth's *The Wreckers* at Covent Garden, and in Rome. A few months after Mahler's death in 1911, Walter led the first performance of *Das Lied von der Erde* in Munich, as well as Mahler's *Symphony No. 9* in Vienna the next year.

Although Walter became an Austrian citizen in 1911, he left Vienna to become the Royal Bavarian Music Director in Munich in 1913. In January of the following year Walter conducted his first concert in Moscow. During the First World War he remained actively involved in conducting, giving premieres to Erich Wolfgang Korngold's *Violanta* and *Der Ring des Polykrates* as well as Pfitzner's *Palestrina*. In Munich Walter was good friends with Eugenio Pacelli (later Pope Pius XII).

Walter ended his Munich appointment in 1922 and left for New York in 1923, working with the New York Symphony Orchestra in Carnegie Hall; he later conducted in Detroit, Minnesota and Boston.

Back in Europe Walter was re-engaged for several appointments, including Berlin in 1925 as musical director at the Städtische Opera, Charlottenburg, and in Leipzig in 1929. He made his debut at La Scala in 1926. In London, Walter was chief conductor of the German seasons at Covent Garden from 1924 to 1931.

In his speeches in the late 1920s, Nazi leader Adolf Hitler complained bitterly about the presence of Jewish conductors at the Berlin opera, and mentioned Walter a number of times, adding to Walter's name the phrase, "alias Schlesinger." In 1933, when the Nazis took power, they undertook a systematic process of barring Jews from artistic life. Walter left for Austria, which became his main center of activity for the next several years, although he was also a frequent guest conductor of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra from 1934 to 1939, and made guest appearances such as in annual concerts with the New York Philharmonic from 1932 to 1936. At the time of the Anschluss in 1938, Walter was at a recording session in Paris; France offered Walter citizenship, which he accepted. (His daughter was in Vienna at the time, and was arrested by the Nazis; Walter was able to use his influence to free her. He also used his influence to find safe quarters for his brother and sister in Scandinavia during the war.)

NOTES FROM WIKIPEDIA - FULL NOTES ON THIS RECORDING CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM