



BRAHMS

SYMPHONY NO 2 IN D, OP 73

NBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTED BY ARTURO TOSCANINI



TOSCANINI



- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro non troppo (14:06)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Adagio non troppo (8:10)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Allegretto grazioso (5:08)
- 4 4th mvt. - Allegro con spirito (8:21)

Recorded in concert at Carnegie Hall on Saturday 10th February, 1951

Originally broadcast by NBC Radio.

The 1/4" tape transfer of broadcast discs used for this transfer is understood to have been sourced directly from the Toscanini family archives.

Transfer and XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, April 2009

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Arturo Toscanini

Total duration: 35:45 ©2009 Pristine Audio.

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BRAHMS: SYMPHONY No 2 IN D, Op 73

The Symphony No. 2 in D, Op. 73 was composed by Johannes Brahms in the summer of 1877 during a visit to the Austrian Alps. Its gestation was brief in comparison with the fifteen years which Brahms took to complete his First Symphony. The symphony is scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings.

The cheerfulness of the Symphony has been likened with the pastoral mood of Ludwig van Beethoven's Sixth Symphony. In contrast, Brahms' First Symphony was marked by its sombre tonality (C minor).

The composer had written to his publisher (November 22, 1877) that the forthcoming symphony would be music of melancholy, that indeed the score must come out in mourning. And while the work is neither tragic nor especially dramatic, the mood of the first two movements, largely quiet or contemplative and reaching climaxes in the minor, suggests that this letter may not have been entirely a creation of wit. The last two movements are lighter in mood but also much briefer. The subtle interplay of contrasting melodies overlapping and being passed around throughout the instruments of the orchestra allow the conductor to dictate the mood by emphasizing different parts.

The premiere was given on December 30, 1877 in Vienna under the direction of Hans Richter. A typical performance lasts between 40 and 50 minutes.

In his book "*Arturo Toscanini - The NBC Years*" (Amadeus Press), Mortimer H. Frank writes:

"Of all the Brahms symphonies, the Second may pose the fewest interpretive problems. Not surprisingly, then, it is the Brahms symphony in which one encounters the fewest changes in approach from one Toscanini reading to another. The main differences among them center on the pacing for the finale: sometimes relatively expansive, as in the magnificent 1952 studio recording, other times swift. The 1938 broadcast features a blend of both approaches. And common to all of Toscanini's surviving accounts is his refusal to accelerate in the movement's coda, where the lullabylike second subject is transformed into a festive peroration for full orchestra.

"As in the Brahms First, Toscanini's way with the Second Symphony is distinguished by a prevailing freedom from sentimentality. Neither of the first two movements is unduly protracted, and both benefit from an exceptional clarity of texture and firmness of pulse, with rubato, if often evident, subtly applied. In both movements surging dynamics and arching phrases suggest the ebb and flow of the sea that Brahms knew so well and that clearly influenced his music. And in all of Toscanini's performances the third movement is a model of unaffected, straightforward simplicity."

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