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Weingartner conducts Brahms Symphonies 3 and 4

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Weingartner

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conducts

BRAHMS

Symphony No. 3 in F major
London Philharmonic Orchestra

Symphony No. 4 in E minor
London Symphony Orchestra

Felix Weingartner, conductor

Columbia UK studio recordings, 1938



The first impression the recording gives is of sweetness and light; the weight is on the slight side, which suits the nature of the streaming music, and the pronounced all-through, unsentimental treatment by the conductor. It may be that the gentle glow in such places as the end of side 1 is thereby a little thinned - on the other hand, the lightening helps to carry the music along, and to resolve some of the total problems; values can easily be muddled. I like the recording, therefore, because of this element, and also for the way in which the wood-wind falls into place and play, it really sounds like play, not work. The unity that the recording conveys is, too, enhanced by the strings' force being so nearly of the kind that transports one to the concert-room, not the foundry. Firmness and the bread-and-butter qualities of attack are always fine qualities under Weingartner's hand (he has, of course, written on this work in *The Symphony since Beethoven*); "Brahms's Eroica," said Richter. One does not minutely compare the two; simply, here is the high heart and high humanity which (without accepting all Carlyle's thoughts about the Hero) he seems to have well defined as "the divine relation which unites a great man to other men." The hero is not a superman, nor a man apart; always, he is the essence of the best of ourselves. In the expression of that, Weingartner's spirit, and the recording, seem united.

The Gramophone, December 1938 (*review of Symphony No. 3, excerpt*)

Transfer notes

After sampling a number of possible sources and making a variety of test transfers of these symphonies over a year ago I decided to admit defeat - temporarily at least. There is something about a number of symphonic recordings made in the late 1930s at Abbey Road's Studio 1 which make them particularly tricky to work on. The sound is often congested, there's a lot of what I term "rubbish" between the actual musical content that has been intermittently captured in the upper treble, and they can take a lot of unravelling. No source seems ideal in this respect, but after putting the project to one side I returned to it, both with my original options still open, and also with some 1960s Columbia LP transfers I'd previously dismissed when tackling Weingartner's recordings of the first two Brahms symphonies (PASC281).

This time around the LPs proved far more successful, and I was able to lift from their dimness some fine orchestral tone and detail. Somewhat, the *Third Symphony* has perhaps the edge, with slightly more of real value to be found in those vital upper reaches, and less crackle to contend with. It also seems to be better recorded in the louder sections - where the *Fourth* too often seems about to coagulate into a rather heavy mush the *Third* retains clarity and good instrumental separation. **AR**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on photographs of
Felix Weingartner and **Johannes Brahms**

Symphony No. 3

Recorded 6 October 1938

Issued as Columbia IX.748-51

Matrix numbers CAX.8335-42

Symphony No. 4

Recorded 14 February 1938

Issued as Columbia IX.705-09

Matrix numbers CAX.8174-83

Recording producer: **Lawrance Collingwood**

Recorded at **Abbey Road Studio 1, London**

Total duration: **67:28**

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Weingartner Brahms Symphonies

BRAHMS Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro con brio (8:43)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Andante (7:33)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Poco allegretto (5:42)
- 4 4th mvt. - Allegro (8:10)

London Philharmonic Orchestra

BRAHMS Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98

- 5 1st mvt. - Allegro non troppo (11:27)
- 6 2nd mvt. - Andante moderato (9:30)
- 7 3rd mvt. - Allegro giocoso (6:39)
- 8 4th mvt. - Allegro energico e passionato (9:44)

London Symphony Orchestra

Felix Weingartner conductor