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Munch: Boston Rarities Volume 1

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Munch made his début with the Boston Symphony Orchestra on 27 December 1946. He was its Music Director from 1949 to 1962. Munch was also Director of the Berkshire Music Festival and Berkshire Music Center (Tanglewood) from 1951 through 1962. He led relaxed rehearsals which orchestra members appreciated after the authoritarian Serge Koussevitzky. Munch also received honorary degrees from Boston College, Boston University, Brandeis University, Harvard University, and the New England Conservatory of Music.

His thirteen-year tenure in Boston included 39 world premieres and 58 American first performances, and offered audiences 168 contemporary works. Fourteen of these premieres were works commissioned by the Boston Symphony and the Koussevitzky Music Foundation to celebrate the Orchestra's 75th Anniversary in 1956.

Munch led the Boston Symphony on its first transcontinental tour of the United States in 1953. He became the first conductor to take them on tour overseas: Europe in 1952 and 1956, and East Asia and Australia in 1960. During the 1956 tour, the Boston Symphony was the first American orchestra to perform in the Soviet Union.

The Boston Symphony under Munch made a series of recordings for RCA Victor from 1949 to 1953 in monaural sound and from 1954 to 1962 in both monaural and stereophonic versions.

Selections from Boston Symphony rehearsals under Leonard Bernstein, Koussevitzky, and Munch were broadcast nationally on the NBC Radio Network from 1948-1951. NBC carried portions of the Orchestra's performances from 1955-1957. Beginning in 1951, the BSO was broadcast over local radio stations in the Boston area. Starting in 1957, Boston Symphony performances under Munch and guest conductors were disseminated regionally, nationally, and internationally through the Boston Symphony Transcription Trust. And, under Munch, the Boston Symphony first appeared on television.

Producer's Note

This release is the first of two which focus on Munch/Boston studio recordings that have never seen an "official" CD reissue, not even in the 40-CD (plus one bonus CD) Japanese RCA series, "The Art of Charles Munch". The present program features two symphonies recorded early in Munch's Boston tenure. One distinguishing characteristic of the Schumann is that the first and fourth movement repeats are observed on this recording, while they are cut in Munch's 1959 stereo remake.

The original LPs were burdened with a rather uningratiating sound (surprisingly from the same Richard Mohr/Lewis Layton team which would go on to produce so many excellent "Living Stereo" releases) – over-reverberant and limiter-plagued. This was a conscious choice in RCA's engineering from the mid-1940s through the early '50s to suggest, as one modern critic put it, a sound so huge, it could scarcely be contained by the microphones. Adding insult to injury, the original LP issue of the Schumann was pitched a semitone sharp, and the first movement contained several minor but noticeable pitch drops. These have been corrected in the current release. **Mark Obert-Thorn**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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Charles Munch: Boston Rarities

Volume One

SCHUMANN

Symphony No. 1 in B-Flat,
"Spring"

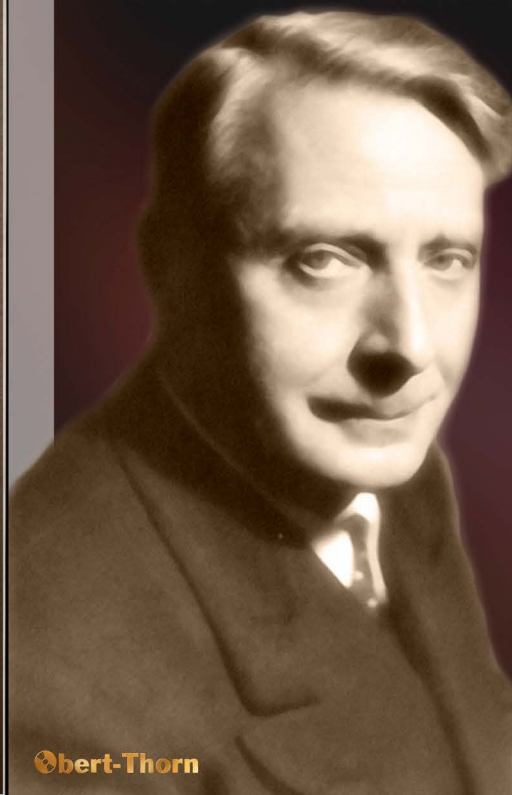
BRAHMS

Symphony No. 4 in E Minor

Charles Munch
Boston Symphony Orchestra

Obert-Thorn

RCA Victor Studio Recordings · 1950-51



Producer & Audio
Restoration Engineer:
Mark Obert-Thorn

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of **Charles Munch**

Schumann Symphony No. 1
Recorded 25 April 1951
in Symphony Hall, Boston
First issued on RCA Victor LM-1190

Brahms Symphony No. 4
Recorded 10 - 11 April 1950
in Symphony Hall, Boston
First issued on RCA Victor LM-1086

Additional Pitch Correction:
Andrew Rose

Total duration: **72:07**

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MUNCH *Boston Rarities, Volume 1*

SCHUMANN *Symphony No. 1 in B-flat major, Op. 38, "Spring"*

- 1 1st Mvt. - Andante un poco maestoso; Allegro molto vivace (12:43)
- 2 2nd Mvt. - Larghetto (7:08)
- 3 3rd Mvt. - Scherzo: Molto vivace (5:29)
- 4 4th Mvt. - Allegretto animato e grazioso (8:50)

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

- 5 1st Mvt. - Allegro non troppo (12:10)
- 6 2nd Mvt. - Andante moderato (10:41)
- 7 3rd Mvt. - Allegro giocoso (5:37)
- 8 4th Mvt. - Allegro energico e passionato (9:29)

Boston Symphony Orchestra *Charles Munch*