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CLIFFORD CURZON *plays Brahms and de Falla*

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I found myself listening spellbound to Curzon's playing. This is the Curzon who, at the age of 39, was only now emerging into the full light of an international career after a long and inspiring apprenticeship with such teachers as Arthur Schnabel and Nadia Boulanger. Indeed, it is that very emergent quality which gives his performance a freshness and shy-voiced eloquence which has the effect of setting the young Brahms vividly and appealingly before us.

R.O., Gramophone, June 1999 - review of *Brahms Piano Concerto No. 1* (excerpt)

I am not going to say that the Decca issue is ideal: the recording of the orchestra in the first movement is coarse, there is distortion in forte passages (though the later movements are free from these blemishes), the orchestral ensemble is not always very polished, and the playing in the opening section is painstaking and dogged rather than vital: but the general approach to the work is musicianly and imaginative, and careful observance of details results in a subtle interpretation which re-creates the composer's tonal impressions. I would single out for special praise the delicate colouring of the second movement and the sensitive feeling in the final pages of the work—pages prophetic of Falla's later and more mature style.

L.S., The Gramophone, January 1952 - review of *de Falla Nights in the Gardens of Spain* (excerpt)

Producer's Note

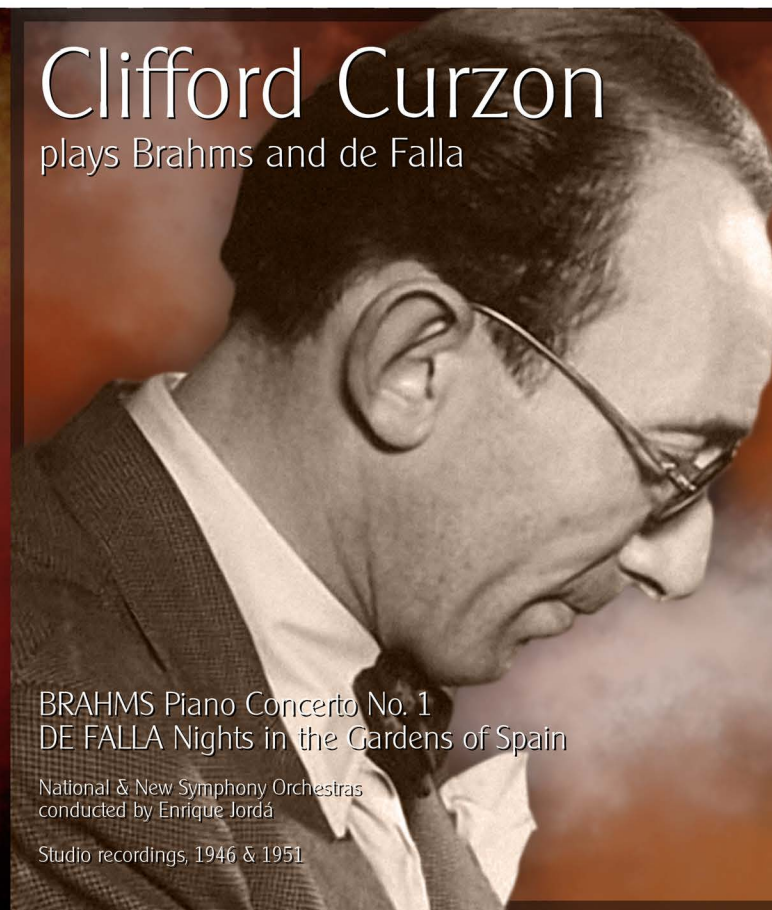
English pianist Clifford Curzon and Spanish (later American) conductor Enrique Jordá recorded two works together for Decca, though in the case of de Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* they actually recorded the work twice - a 1945 recording of the piece was remade in 1951 for LP release "for technical reasons" according to The Gramophone (at the time Decca were busy dubbing their *ffrr* 78s for LP release as much as making new recordings); here we present the later recording. Jordá, judging by the Decca discography, was something of a jobbing conductor for the label at the time, leading a number of different orchestras in recordings between 1945 and 1951 - the de Falla being his final Decca outing. Decca had signed Curzon to the label in 1937 and continued recording for them regularly for 34 years - despite a professed distaste for recordings.

These XR remasters take what were cutting edge recordings of their day, both direct to 78rpm disc (Brahms) and early tape (de Falla) and bring modern technology and techniques to bear on both of them. Both suffered pitch inconsistencies which have been corrected; XR remastering has, in the case of the Brahms, really opened out the somewhat constricted top end whilst, in the Falla, an excessively shrill and exaggerated top end has been tamed and the sound filled out. I also had to deal with the notorious Kingsway Hall rumble on both recordings, which was at times annoyingly obvious. Whilst revealing occasional surface coarseness in the 78s, both are a considerable improvement on previous issues. **Andrew Rose**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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BRAHMS Piano Concerto No. 1 DE FALLA *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*

National & New Symphony Orchestras
conducted by Enrique Jordá

Studio recordings, 1946 & 1951

CURZON *plays* Brahms & de Falla

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph
of Clifford Curzon

BRAHMS Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor, Op. 15

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro (21:25)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Adagio (14:24)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Rondo - Allegro non troppo (11:06)

National Symphony Orchestra

Brahms Piano Concerto
Recording producer: Victor Olof
Recording Engineer: Kenneth Wilkinson
Recorded 5 June 1946, Kingsway Hall, London
Issued as Decca (A)K1491-96
Matrix Nos. AR10362-73

Falla Nights in the Gardens of Spain
Recording producer: John Culshaw
Recording Engineer: Kenneth Wilkinson
Recorded 2 July 1951, Kingsway Hall, London
Issued as Decca LXT2621
Matrix Nos. AR16233-38

DE FALLA Nights in the Gardens of Spain

- 1 1. En el Giralife (10:28)
- 2 2. Danza lejana (5:40)
- 3 3. En los jardines de la Sierra de Cordoba (8:29)

New Symphony Orchestra

Total duration: 71:32

Enrique Jordá *conductor*

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Clifford Curzon *piano*

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