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JASCHA HORENSTEIN

Mahler - Symphony No. 9

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We heard in Vienna that which constitutes the composer's spiritual legacy: the Ninth Symphony and "Das Lied von der Erde", both first performed by Bruno Walter shortly after Mahler's death. In the first of these two twilight works, Jascha Horenstein, one of the most eminent representatives of the Mahler tradition along with Klemperer and the irreplaceable Walter, conducting the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, offered the Konzerthaus a vibrant and meditative interpretation, a transcendent recreation of this farewell to the world.

Horenstein breathed into the two central movements all the savage violence and forceful opposition they require to deliver religiously into both adagios a huge degree of meditation. An exasperated man's revolt, still detectable in the funereal introduction of the first movement, gives way in the finale - after a final burst, a vain plea, a supreme view over this world of bitterness - to the calm resignation and acceptance of a dying man. The unfolding of this long agony, where death is finally awaited as the only deliverance, this total detachment brings indelible impressions, multiple complaints subside, extinguishing bit-by-bit imperceptible nuances, whispers decreasing to melt into the silence of eternity.

Pierre Para, *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, Paris, 21 July 1960 - (trans. Andrew Rose)

Producer's Note

Conductor Jascha Horenstein has long been regarded as one of the finest exponents of the music of Gustav Mahler. His 1952 studio recording of the Ninth Symphony was the first such recording to be commercially released (the 1938 Walter was partly or entirely live; a 1950 studio effort by Scherchen only appeared long after it was recorded). A small handful of other recordings, made between the mid-1950s and the late sixties and generally live, have appeared over the years, but never this particular rendition from the Vienna Festival of 1960 which, over three weeks, celebrated Mahler's centenary. The conductor's cousin, Misha Horenstein, who has once again generously supplied the source recording for this release, writes eloquently on the background to this performance on our website. Technically the remastering proved trickier than first hearing suggested it might. Although there were no major or obvious flaws beyond one or two instances of tape dropout, microphone positioning, coupled with a mono sound, made for a somewhat uncomfortable listen during louder passages, with a mid-range stridence in the upper strings that took some effort to tame without sacrificing the direct energy and vivacity of the central movements. This is a mono recording, but the aforementioned issues aside, it's now a very good one - especially given Pristine's Ambient Stereo treatment, which I strongly recommend here. The orchestral sound is especially clear, full, direct and vivid. Happily the audience generally saved their coughing, shuffling and throat-clearing for lengthy gaps between movements which, in order to fit the music to CD duration, have been edited down significantly. The result is one of the great Ninth performances, offered for the first time, and in superb sound quality. **Andrew Rose**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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Horenstein

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conducts

MAHLER

Symphony No. 9

Vienna Symphony Orchestra

Previously unreleased live recording, 1960

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MAHLER SYMPHONY No. 9
HORENSTEIN, VIENNA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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MAHLER *Symphony No. 9*

- 1 1st mvt. - Andante comodo (25:35)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Im Tempo eines gemächlichen Ländlers, Etwas täppisch und sehr derb (15:59)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Rondo-Burleske: Allegro assai. Sehr trotzig (12:37)
- 4 4th mvt. - Adagio, Sehr langsam und noch zurückhaltend (25:00)

Recorded 22 June 1960, Konzerthaus, Vienna
Closing concert of the 1960 Vienna Festival «Wiener Festwochen»
Recording from the archive of Misha Horenstein
First publication of this recording

Vienna Symphony Orchestra
Jascha Horenstein, conductor

XR remastering by
Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of **Jascha**
Horenstein

Total duration: **79:11**

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