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FRANZ SCHALK

The Complete Recordings

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Producer's Note

Those at all familiar with the name of Franz Schalk most likely associate it with the editing of critically-disparaged cut versions of Bruckner symphonies. This does a disservice, however, to his achievements in a long conducting career. Schalk was born in Vienna on May 27, 1863. He studied under Bruckner and violinist Joseph Hellmesberger, and after a series of conducting posts in increasingly important venues – from Bohemia to Graz (where he premiered Bruckner's Fifth Symphony in 1894), Prague, Berlin, London's Covent Garden and New York's Metropolitan Opera – Mahler appointed him First Kapellmeister of the Vienna Court Opera in 1900.

For the next three decades, he reigned as one of the most important conductors in Vienna, heading the (renamed) State Opera from 1919 to 1929 (where Richard Strauss, whose *Die Frau ohne Schatten* Schalk premiered in 1919, was co-director for several years), leading the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde for 17 years, and serving as one of the driving forces in the postwar revival of the Salzburg Festival.

From the recorded evidence, Schalk favored swift, flowing tempi, with occasional slowing for rhetorical effect. In this, he was similar to other conductors of his generation such as Felix Weingartner (b.1863) and Richard Strauss (b.1864), musicians who came of age around the time of Wagner's passing, and different from the more monumental approach favored by the following generation, including Otto Klemperer (b.1885) and Wilhelm Furtwängler (b.1886).

Schalk's brief recording career began in 1928 with a Schubert *Unfinished* with the Berlin State Opera Orchestra for Odeon. (The 1927 date given in earlier reissues of this recording is incorrect.) The entire symphony was recorded in single takes on January 12th, but nothing from this session was issued. A remake session on March 2nd, with all takes listed as "2" was approved. (The issued version of Side 5, listed as "Take 3", is a sonically compromised dubbing in all editions).

A month later, Schalk began a series of Beethoven recordings with the Vienna Philharmonic for HMV. Although that orchestra had previously made some acoustic recordings for Gramophone in 1924, these were its first electrical discs. Four sessions stretching over two weeks produced the Sixth and Eighth Symphonies and the *Leonore* Overture No. 3. A further session eighteen months later in October, 1929, followed by a makeup session the following January, was devoted to the Beethoven Fifth.

Schalk and the VPO were to go before the microphone one final time, on April 16, 1931 to remake the most problematic of his earlier recordings. The first side of the Beethoven Fifth, with its opening ensemble imprecisions, was redone, as was the entire Beethoven Eighth, whose 1928 recording was plagued with obtrusive low-frequency hum (corrected in this transfer). Neither of these recordings were issued, however. HMV's reported plans to record Schalk in the Bruckner Third and Fourth Symphonies came to naught with the conductor's death on September 3, 1931.

The sources for the transfers were American Columbia "Viva-Tonal" pressings for the Schubert, British HMV shellacs for the Beethoven Sixth and Eighth, and red label 1930s German Electrola pressings for the *Leonore* Overture and the Beethoven Fifth (the latter with patches from British HMVs).

Mark Obert-Thorn

Obert-Thorn

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BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 5

Symphony No. 6

Symphony No. 8

Leonore Overture No. 3

Berlin State Opera Orchestra
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
Franz Schalk, conductor

Studio recordings, 1923-1930

SCHUBERT

Symphony No. 8 "Unfinished"

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FRANZ SCHALK THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS
SCHALK, BERLIN STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, VIENNA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

CD 1

SCHUBERT *Symphony No. 8 in B minor, D759 'Unfinished'*
1 1st Mvt. - Allegro moderato (9:47)
2 2nd Mvt. - Andante con moto (11:02)
Recorded 2 March 1928 in Berlin
Matrix nos.: XXB 7918-2, 7919-2, 7920-2, 7921-2, 7922-3 & 7923-2
First issued on Odeon O-8344/46
BEETHOVEN *Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68 'Pastoral'*
3 1st Mvt. - Allegro ma non troppo (8:33)
4 2nd Mvt. - Andante molto mosso (14:00)
5 3rd Mvt. - Allegro (5:05)
6 4th Mvt. - Allegro (3:37)
7 5th Mvt. - Allegretto (8:21)
Recorded 4, 11 & 12 April 1928 in the Mittlerer Konzerthausaal, Vienna
Matrix nos.: Ck 2854-2, 2855-2, 2856-2, 2857-2, 2858-1, 2859-2, 2860-2, 2861-2, 2862-2 & 2863-2
First issued on HMV D 1473/7

CD 2

BEETHOVEN *Symphony No. 8 in F major, Op. 93*
1 1st Mvt. - Allegro vivace e con brio (7:45)
2 2nd Mvt. - Allegretto scherzando (3:55)
3 3rd Mvt. - Tempo di menuetto (4:38)
4 4th Mvt. - Allegro vivace (8:15)
Recorded 12 – 13 April 1928 in the Mittlerer Konzerthausaal, Vienna
Matrix nos.: Ck 2867-2, 2868-2, 2869-2, 2870-2, 2871-1 & 2872-1
First issued on HMV D 1481/3
5 **BEETHOVEN** *Leonore Overture No. 3, Op. 72b* (13:41)
Recorded 13 April 1928 in the Mittlerer Konzerthausaal, Vienna
Matrix nos.: Ck 2873-3, 2874-1, 2875-1 & 2876-1
First issued on Electrola EJ 332/3
BEETHOVEN *Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67*
6 1st Mvt. - Allegro con brio (7:46)
7 2nd Mvt. - Andante con moto (8:54)
8 3rd Mvt. - Allegro (5:03)
9 4th Mvt. - Allegro (8:44)
Recorded 26 & 28 October 1929 and 27 January 1930 in the Mittlerer Konzerthausaal, Vienna
Matrix nos.: CW 2881-2, 2882-1, 2883-4, 2884-2, 2887-4, 2888-2, 2889-2 & 2890-2
First issued on Electrola EH 620/3

Berlin State Opera Orchestra (*Schubert*)
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (*Beethoven*)
Franz Schalk *conductor*

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Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer:
Mark Obert-Thorn

Pitch stabilisation (Schubert):
Andrew Rose

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photograph of Franz Schalk

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