

Bruno Walter

conducts Mozart

PRISTINE
AUDIO

The present set brings together nearly all of Bruno Walter's pre-war recordings of Mozart, including his unissued-on-78-rpm world première recording of the *Requiem*. It duplicates all the works contained on the 1991 EMI Références 3-CD set, and adds two recordings from the 1920s omitted there: the overture to *Die Zauberflöte* and the Symphony No. 40. The only items not included here are those which have already appeared on Pristine releases: two acoustic Polydor overture recordings (*Così fan tutte* and *Idomeneo*, reissued on PASC 142) and earlier electric versions of the overture to *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* (PASC 492).

In an era which boasted such notable Mozart interpreters as Sir Thomas Beecham, Arturo Toscanini and Fritz Busch, Bruno Walter stood out for his distinctive approach, one which combined energy and forward momentum with warmth and heartfelt affection. Walter's Mozart was a Romantic-era creation: he would often slow the tempo at the introduction of a second subject; insert an extra beat before the Trio section of a Minuet; and vary his tempi and dynamic levels to make an interpretive point, even if nothing was explicitly indicated in the score. (Listen, for example, to the last movement of *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* – straightforward on paper but with so many personal touches in performance).

Two items here merit particular note. The first is Walter's recording of Mozart's D minor Piano Concerto, K. 466, with the conductor also performing the solo part. This was done at a time when it was even less common for conductors to double as soloists than it is today. Walter's original intent was to be a concert pianist, a goal which changed the first time he heard a performance of *Tristan und Isolde*. But he continued to play privately, and occasionally in public as an accompanist to lieder singers. As late as the 1950s, Pablo Casals lamented that Walter had not kept up his playing, as he thought him "a very great pianist". In this performance, if not "great", Walter proves at least a very capable and sensitive interpreter, and one who was able to get the Vienna Philharmonic to play like chamber music collaborators.

The other noteworthy performance is the live recording of the *Requiem*, made when the Philharmonic was on tour during the 1937 Paris Exposition. Its distinction lies not so much in its execution, which by all accounts is rather variable (Walter himself rejected the recording, citing "a trombone solo being not clear" and some "false" singing by the solo quartet), but in its primacy as the first complete recording of the work, as well as a chance to hear such legendary singers as Elisabeth Schumann and Alexander Kipnis.

For the first time here, the original recording made by French HMV on fifteen 78 rpm sides can be heard absolutely complete, from the opening applause onward, with no cuts shortening the time between movements except that between the *Lacrimosa* and *Domine Jesu*. On the original recording, there is more than four minutes of audience noise during which Walter (and perhaps the soloists as well) apparently left the stage, then returned to thunderous applause. This portion has been edited out in the present transfer.

All of the issued Vienna recordings were transferred from pre-war US Victor "Gold" label pressings except for the first side of the *German Dances*, which came from a British HMV copy because the Victor release used a dubbed side. The *Requiem* was transferred from vinyl 78 rpm test pressings. The Columbians came from American "Viva-Tonal" (*Zauberflöte* Overture) and "Royal Blue" (*Nozze di Figaro* Overture) pressings. The Symphony No. 40 was originally recorded at a very low volume level. As a result, when the volume was increased for this transfer, the surface noise was also increased. I used here an early laminated English Columbia copy, as it proved to be less problematic than the more rumble-prone US Columbia "Royal Blue" shellac pressings.

Mark Obert-Thorn

PASC 564

bruno walter

conducts mozart

the pre-war recordings

discs 1 & 2

symphony nos. 38 – 41
piano concerto no. 20
overtures and dances

studio recordings, 1928–1938

Obert-Thorn

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disc one

1. **MOZART** Die Zauberflöte, K. 620 - Overture (6:45)
Mozart Festival Orchestra
2. **MOZART** Le nozze di Figaro, K. 492 - Overture (4:08)
British Symphony Orchestra
3. **MOZART** La Clemenza di Tito, K. 621 - Overture (4:19)
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
4. **MOZART** La finta giardiniera, K. 196 - Overture (2:14)
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra

MOZART Three German Dances, K. 605

5. No. 1 in D major (1:30)
6. No. 2 in G major (1:27)
7. No. 3 in C major ("Sleigh Ride") (2:38)
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra

MOZART Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K.644

8. 1st Mvt. - Allegro (Cadenza: Reinecke) (13:21)
9. 2nd Mvt. - Romance (7:59)
10. 3rd Mvt. - Rondo (Allegro assai) (Cadenza: Reinecke) (6:17)
Bruno Walter, piano
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra

MOZART Symphony No. 38 in D major, K.504, 'Prague'

11. 1st Mvt. - Adagio - Allegro (9:31)
12. 2nd. Mvt. - Andante (8:50)
13. 3rd. Mvt. - Finale (Presto) (4:11)
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn

Special thanks to Nathan Brown, Ward Marston and Charles Niss for providing source material
Full discographic information available online

Total duration: 3hr 43:44

disc two

MOZART Symphony No. 39 in E flat major, K.543

1. 1st Mvt. - Adagio - Allegro (8:56)
2. 2nd Mvt. - Andante con moto (8:53)
3. 3rd Mvt. - Menuetto (Allegretto) & Trio (4:04)
4. 4th Mvt. - Finale (Allegro) (3:44)
BBC Symphony Orchestra

MOZART Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K.550

5. 1st. Mvt. - Allegro molto - Andante (6:19)
6. 2nd Mvt. - Andante (8:27)
7. 3rd Mvt. - Menuetto (Allegretto) & Trio (4:09)
8. 4th Mvt - Finale (Allegro assai) (4:15)
Berlin State Orchestra

MOZART Symphony No. 41 in C major, K.551, 'Jupiter'

9. 1st Mvt. - Allegro vivace (8:05)
10. 2nd Mvt. - Andante cantabile (8:11)
11. 3rd. Mvt. - Menuetto (Allegretto) & Trio (4:31)
12. 4th Mvt. - Molto Allegro (6:34)
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra

conducted by Bruno Walter

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conducts Mozart

Vintage Review Excerpts

Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor

"The solo work [in the first movement] is workmanlike, strong in passage work, well balanced and planned in the light of the orchestral interplay as one would expect of this conductor, and as is keenly necessary in a work so closely knit between the two parties, who are entirely happy in consort. The pianism, whilst not lacking delicacy, is of a forthright expository kind that fills out well in recorded quality, even if a run here and there is not quite faultless. Unfortunately, the cadenzas by 'Reinicke' (presumably Reinecke) are used. The mood of the first movement is quite dissipated by the sentimental touch . . .

"The slow movement simply wants a clear sensitive setting forth of the piano theme, with a still more tender accompaniment, and that we get. It is a pleasure to hear the soloist's gentle, masculinely persuasive style . . . The orchestra's wood-wind in this movement is especially gracious and expressively tender . . .

"The pianism [in the finale] is rather more of a conductor's brand, showing some signs of little inequalities the overcoming of which calls for so many thousand hours of almost spirit-breaking practice: one reason why the finest pianists are so rare . . .

"A strong, clean, sensible recording, in which perhaps the orchestra has the best presentation. The performance is sufficiently taut for most tastes . . ."

W.R.A. in Gramophone, October, 1938

Symphony No. 41 in C major, "Jupiter"

"I have long lived in hope of finding a recording that makes the finale of this work sound as big as the notes look. I have heard it so in the concert room, but not even (I venture to say) in Beecham's fine recording . . .

"The recording seeks that large, lucid brightness which we have come to expect from Vienna. It adds a familiar super-shine that I cannot quite so greatly take to, but if ever music could stand a high polish and strong sunlight (not limelight), it is this. The playing shines equally, in accomplishment, so you are sure of a good time . . .

"In the slow movement, I admire the beautiful balance the band secures in the light scoring . . . This remarkably spacious movement . . . has all manner of instrumental attractions, which could not, I think, be more graciously deployed than here. It never lags, never loses serenity. The minuet, alternately, resounds with the best Vienna pomp . . . The finale is all martial clamour – a wee bit too much at moments, in this reverberation period. But the playing is always sharp as a sword, and surely directed by a master-at-arms . . . There is a tensity and yet controlled freedom about the playing that pleases me. The music pulls not by sudden shock, but partly by accumulation of the sense of immense resource and partly by a steady hurling of implacable themes. It has an almost hypnotic quality. The triumphant drive of it is unforgettable."

W.R.A. in Gramophone, March, 1938

bruno walter

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PASC 564

the pre-war recordings

disc 3

eine kleine nachtmusik
requiem

studio recordings, 1936-1937

bert-Thorn

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disc three

MOZART Serenade No. 13 in G major, K. 525, "Eine kleine Nachtmusik"

1. 1st Mvt. - Allegro (4:12)
2. 2nd Mvt. - Romanze (Andante) (4:35)
3. 3rd Mvt. - Menuetto (Allegro) & Trio (2:07)
4. 4th Mvt. - Rondo (Allegro) (4:09)

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra

MOZART Requiem in D minor, K. 626

5. *Applause* (0:44)

6. I. Introitus: Requiem aeternam (5:48)
7. II. Kyrie Eleison (3:28)
- III. Sequenz
8. *Dies Irae* (1:47)
9. *Tuba Mirum* (4:04)
10. *Rex Tremendae* (2:28)
11. *Recordare* (6:31)
12. *Confutatis* (3:05)
13. *Lacrimosa* (3:31)

- IV. Offertorium
14. *Domine Jesu* (4:58)
15. *Hostias* (6:05)
16. V. Sanctus (1:50)
17. VI. Benedictus (5:14)
18. VII. Agnus Dei (3:24)
19. VIII. Communio: Lux aeterna (6:26)

Elisabeth Schumann (soprano)

Enid Szánthó (contralto)

Anton Dermota (tenor)

Alexander Kipnis (bass)

Vienna State Opera Chorus

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra

conducted by Bruno Walter

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