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Horenstein conducts Mahler

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Although a beautifully bound score of Mahler's Third Symphony found in Jascha Horenstein's library boasts a calligraphic dedication to him on his twenty-fifth birthday, 6 May 1923, the work appears to have entered his repertoire only in January 1953 when he gave its Italian premiere in Rome. Strangely and sadly, the Italian broadcaster RAI did not preserve the tapes from that occasion, which also included the world premiere of Alban Berg's *Altenberg* songs. Horenstein subsequently conducted the symphony twice in London, made a celebrated commercial recording for Unicorn in 1970 and performed it again in Turin, Italy, in December 1970. The present recording documents Horenstein's second performance of the symphony in November 1961, an occasion that is associated with several notable "firsts": it was the first concert performance of Mahler's Third in the UK by a professional orchestra; it was the first time the London Symphony Orchestra played the work; it was the first time Helen Watts sang the solo part for which she later became famous, and it marked the first appearance of the celebrated Highgate School Choir on an international stage.

The performance, errors of execution notwithstanding, faithfully reproduces Horenstein's meticulously fashioned view of Mahler's longest symphony, with a strong sense of unity within each movement and through the work as a whole while maintaining the rich diversity of pace, rhythm, character and motif that Mahler poured into it. The interpretation is clearheaded and direct, climaxes are slow to build (a characteristic feature of Horenstein's Mahler) but absolute in their power and never leave one in doubt as to where and when the culminating points are reached. In this performance, probably due to the presence of an audience, Horenstein abandoned the somewhat reserved air that distinguished his Unicorn recording for a more forceful, propulsive approach of sustained and intense concentration and sweep, capturing some of those qualities that in the concert hall made him so absorbing and persuasive an interpreter.

Of the two song cycles included on this disc, Horenstein's favorite by far was *Kindertotenlieder*, whose world premiere recording he conducted in Berlin in 1928 with soloist Heinrich Rehkemper. He subsequently performed it with, among others, Marian Anderson, Janet Baker and Fischer-Dieskau but only recorded it and the *Wayfarer* songs with baritone Norman Foster for Vox. Horenstein "found" Foster in Vienna while working on Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* and although he described him as "simply marvelous", they never again collaborated following the present recordings. Possessor of a deep, rich, well-supported voice with good diction but a somewhat limited upper range, Foster delivers dark, vibrant performances of Mahler's two song cycles that also highlight many characteristic features of Horenstein's style: clarity of texture, subtle rubatos and a seemingly effortless coordination of details within the larger musical form.

Misha Horenstein



horenstein

conducts mahler



disc one

MAHLER Kindertotenlieder

1. 1. Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgeh'n (5:37)
2. 2. Nun seh' ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen (4:45)
3. 3. Wenn dein Mütterlein (5:02)
4. 4. Oft denk' ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen (3:03)
5. 5. In diesem Wetter (6:55)

MAHLER Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen

6. 1. Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht (3:27)
7. 2. Ging heut morgen übers Feld (4:10)
8. 3. Ich hab' ein glühend Messer (3:03)
9. 4. Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz (5:06)

Norman Foster (baritone)

Bamberg Symphony Orchestra

conducted by **Jascha Horenstein**

Recorded at Dominikanerbau, Bamberg, Germany,
mid-September 1954
Engineer: Ward Botsford
Originally released as VOX PL 9100

MAHLER Symphony No. 3 - *Erste Abtheilung*

10. 1st mvt. - Kräftig, Entschieden (30:03)

disc two

MAHLER Symphony No. 3 - *Zweite Abtheilung*

1. 2nd mvt. - Tempo di Minuetto (8:41)
2. 3rd mvt. - Comodo, Scherzando. Ohne Hast (16:18)
3. 4th mvt. - Sehr Langsam. Misterioso. Durchaus Leise (8:46)
4. 5th mvt. - Lustig im Tempo und keck im Ausdruck (4:03)
5. 6th mvt. - Langsam, Ruhevoll. Empfundene (21:40)

Helen Watts (contralto)

Dennis Egan (posthorn)

Denis Wick (trombone)

Highgate School Choir, Orpington Junior Singers, London

Symphony Chorus

London Symphony Orchestra

conducted by **Jascha Horenstein**

Recorded live, Royal Festival Hall., London, 16 November 1961

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a photograph of **Jascha Horenstein** by
Photo Tornow, Lausanne from the archive of **Misha Horenstein**.
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discs of Symphony No. 3

Total duration: 2hr 10:39

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