

BOULT AND THE BBC SYMPHONY *The Pre-War Recordings, Volume 2*

This volume is the second in a series of four which will reissue all of Sir Adrian Boult's orchestral recordings with the BBC Symphony from the 1930s, many for the first time since their appearance on 78 rpm discs. While his concerto recordings with the ensemble during this period have remained sporadically available, his purely orchestral discs have seen only a handful of reissues over the years, focusing on a small amount of repertoire. The present release features the only recordings of the overtures by Auber, Weber and Schumann that Boult made over his long career; and to the best of our knowledge, half of the selections on this release have never previously been reissued.

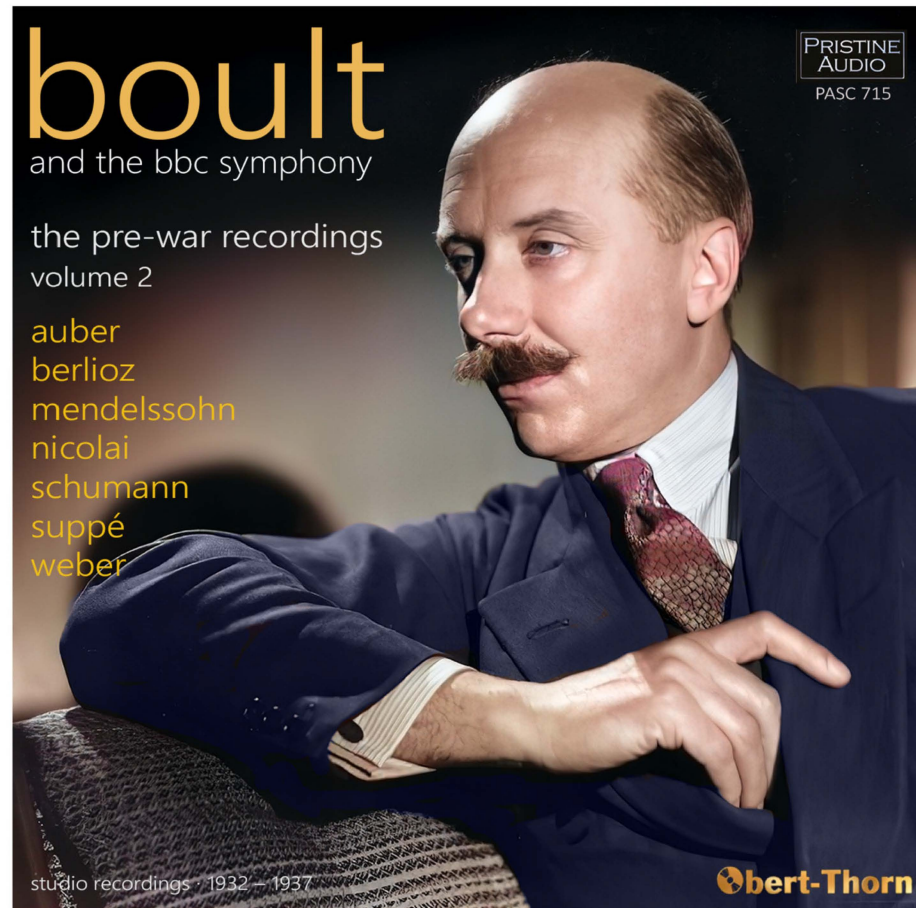
Adrian Boult had been the music director of the City of Birmingham Orchestra since 1924 when he was approached by the British Broadcasting Company regarding the creation of a permanent orchestra for broadcasts and concerts. Its first appearance in October, 1930 revolutionized the London music scene with a standard of playing far above what had hitherto been the norm, an achievement that was soon rivaled by Beecham's creation of the London Philharmonic two years later. The BBC Symphony, which Boult led until he reached his mandatory retirement age in 1950, made its first recordings in May, 1932. He was knighted in 1937.

While the first volume of our series focused on Baroque and Classical era repertoire, this release presents music from the early Romantic period; and while the earlier release included works of extended length (including three symphonies), the present one is comprised mainly of lively, colorful opera overtures, the kind of music which was once ubiquitous as symphonic program openers and at outdoor bandshell concerts, but which has almost completely disappeared from the repertoire over the past several decades.

Boult greatly admired Toscanini (as can be heard in his radio interval talk during one of The Maestro's postwar Philharmonia Brahms concerts on PASC 377), and his approach in these works mirrors the elder conductor's focus on clarity of instrumental lines, forward-moving tempi and avoidance of interpretational indulgence. Boult uses string portamenti sparingly, yet with effect; and he is also able to whip up immense excitement, a prime example of which is the ending of the *Roman Carnival* Overture. (Interestingly, Boult had recorded both sides of this work at the beginning of a session involving several works, then had the orchestra repeat the last side for two more takes at the end, presumably after they had been sufficiently loosened up. It was from those last takes that the published side was taken.)

The sources for the transfers were American Victor "Z"-type shellac pressings for the *Hebrides*, *Ruy Blas*, *Masaniello* and *Light Cavalry* overtures and the *Midsummer Night's Dream* Nocturne; Victor "Gold" label pressings for the *Euryanthe*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Manfred* overtures; wartime Victors (the earliest U.S. editions) for *Les francs juges* and *Le roi Lear*; and British HMV discs for the remainder, which were not issued in the States.

Mark Obert-Thorn



disc one (73:49)

1. **WEBER** *Der Freischütz* - Overture (8:28)
Recorded 7 October 1932 · Matrices: 2B 2855-6 & 2856-3 · First issued on HMV DB 1678
2. **WEBER** *Euryanthe* - Overture (7:54)
Recorded 28 January 1937 · Matrix: 2EA 4630-1A & 4631-1A · First issued on HMV DB 3130
3. **MENDELSSOHN** *Hebrides Overture*
(*Fingal's Cave*), Op. 26 (9:16)
Recorded 20 October 1933 · Matrices: 2B 4687-2 & 4688-2A · First issued on HMV DB 2100
4. **MENDELSSOHN** Nocturne
from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Op. 61 (5:34)
Aubrey Brain, solo horn
Recorded 6 April 1933 · Matrices: 0B 4168-2 & 4169-1 · First issued on HMV DA 1318
5. **MENDELSSOHN** *Ruy Blas* - Overture, Op. 95 (7:12)
Recorded 2 November 1934 · Matrices: 2EA 880-1A & 881-2A · First issued on HMV DB 2365
6. **BERLIOZ** *Les francs juges* Overture, Op. 3 (13:10)
Recorded 3 December 1936 · Matrices: 2EA 4168-1A, 4169-1 & 4170-1
First issued on HMV DB 3131/2
7. **BERLIOZ** *Le roi Lear* Overture, Op. 4 (13:27)
Recorded 3 December 1936 · Matrices: 2EA 4171-1A, 4172-1 & 4173-1
First issued on HMV DB 3093/4
8. **BERLIOZ** *Roman Carnival* Overture, Op.9 (8:48)
Recorded 20 October 1933 · Matrices: 2B 4685-1 & 4686-2A · First issued on HMV DB 2078

BBC Symphony Orchestra
conducted by **Sir Adrian Boult**

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: **Mark Obert-Thorn**
Special thanks to the British Library, Nathan Brown, Richard A. Kaplan and Charles Niss for providing source material

Total duration: 1hr 58:06

disc two (44:17)

1. **AUBER** *Masaniello* - Overture (7:37)
Recorded 2 November 1934 · Matrices: 2EA 878-3A & 879-2A
First issued on HMV DB 2364
2. **NICOLAI** *The Merry Wives of Windsor* - Overture (7:26)
Recorded 27 March 1934 · Matrices: 2B 6851-2A & 6852-1A
First issued on HMV DB 2195
3. **CHOPIN** (orch. Elgar) Funeral March
from Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor, Op. 35 (7:24)
Recorded 30 May 1932 · Matrices: 2B 2903-1B & 2904-2A
First issued on HMV DB 1722
4. **MEYERBEER** Coronation March from *Le prophète* (3:27)
Recorded 16 April 1937 · Matrices: 2EA 1053-3 · First issued on HMV DB 3163
5. **SCHUMANN** *Manfred* - Overture, Op. 115 (11:25)
Recorded 27 March 1934 · Matrices: 2B 6847-2A, 6848-2A & 6849-1
First issued on HMV DB 2189/90
6. **SUPPÉ** *Light Cavalry* - Overture (6:59)
Recorded 2 November 1934 · Matrices: 2EA 876-2A & 877-2A
First issued on HMV DB 2362

All recordings made at Abbey Road Studio No. 1,
London except for CD 1, Track 1, recorded in
Kingsway Hall, London