

Friedrich Schorr WAGNER Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

The introduction of electrical technology in 1925 enabled recording to move outside the confines of the studio, and HMV and its associated companies were quick to take the microphone into the open house. Starting with recordings made at Covent Garden and La Scala in 1926, excerpts of live operatic performances began to be issued commercially on disc.

During the 1927-28 concert season, recordings were made at the Berlin State Opera during public performances of three works: *La Bohème*, *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Die Meistersinger*. For the last of the three, two performances were recorded. Fourteen sides were taken down on April 29th, 1928, while another 32 sides (many of them duplicating the earlier recorded portions) were waxed on May 22nd at the performance given in honor of Wagner's 115th birthday. From these, the 20 sides of the issued set were chosen.

There was no thought at the time of recording the work complete. (When that was finally done, at the 1951 Bayreuth Festival, the result took a formidable 68 sides.) In selecting which excerpts to release, the focus seemed to be on portions which were not already available – or likely to be available – as single disc releases. Thus, we have no Preludes, nor either of Sachs' monologues. Instead, we have David explaining the song rules to Walther and Poppe discussing his doubts with Eva, as well as scenes which work better in the unedited long-form of an actual performance, like the extended *Schmeichel* scene from Act 2. We do have the finale, which the same performers had already recorded in the studio the previous year, but one couldn't imagine ending the set without it. The overriding reason *d'être* for the recording, however, was the preservation of Friedrich Schorr's portrayal of Sachs, which was already considered in a class by itself.

A controversy has arisen recently regarding the identity of conductor. The labels of the original discs give no performer credits at all. The 1936 Gramophone Shop Encyclopedia identified the singers, but it was only with the first volume of WEA's in 1951 that Blech is credited as conductor. Someone claiming to have the libretto of the May 22nd performance has said it lists Erich Kleiber for "Musikalische Leitung". The wording choice seems ambiguous; one would think he would be listed as "Dirigent" if he in fact conducted the performance. Kleiber was co-Music Director of the BSOO with Blech at the time; could that title have been a reference to this position? In any event, Alan Kelly's research into the HMV logs shows Blech listed as "Dirigent" for both performances.

In the issued set, all the sides save the opening of Act 2 (Track 3) came from the May performance. From the earlier date, two further sides have been discovered and are published here for the first time. They show differences in microphone placement (the asides between Walther and Eva during the *Schmeichel* are more audible here) as well as featuring a different Beckmesser and Walther, along with some unwelcome stage noises. A check of the EMI vaults has shown these to be the only extant unpublished sides from either performance. (Due to CD tining limitations, the second unpublished side had to be faded out about a half-minute before its conclusion here. However, it is available complete as a download on the Pristine Audio website page devoted to this release.)

Mark Ober-Thorn

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Friedrich Schorr

plays Sachs in

Wagner's
Die Meistersinger
von Nürnberg
[Excerpts]

Berlin State Opera
Orchestra and Chorus
Leo Blech

The legendary 1928 live recording
Includes two previously unreleased sides

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Friedrich Schorr Die Meistersinger

- [1] Act I - Hilf Gott! Will ich denn Schuster sein? (Walther, David, Apprentices) (8:11)
CLR 4165-1A/4166-1 · HMV/Electrola EJ 277
- [2] Act I - Das schöne Fest, Johannistag (Pogner) (4:25)
CLR 4168-1/4169-1A · HMV/Electrola EJ 278
- [3] Act II - Johannistag! Johannistag! (Apprentices, David, Magdalene) (3:07)*
CLR 4072-1 · HMV/Electrola EJ 279
- [4] Act II - Hab ich heut Singstund? (David, Sachs, Pogner, Eva) (4:37)
CLR 4171-1A · HMV/Electrola EJ 279
- [5] Act II - Jerum! Jerum! (Sachs, Beckmesser, Walther, Eva, Neighbors) (19:25)
CLR 4174-1/4175-1A/4176-1/4177-1A/4178-1 · HMV/Electrola EJ 280/2
- [6] Act III - Gleich, Meister! Hier! (David, Sachs) (7:13)
CLR 4181-1A/4182-1 · HMV/Electrola EJ 282/3
- [7] Act III - Grüss Gott, mein Evchen! (Sachs, Eva, Walther) (11:17)
CLR 4185-1/4186-1A/4187-1 · HMV/Electrola EJ 283/4
- [8] Act III - [Sankt Krispin,] lobet ihn! (Shoemakers, Tailors, Bakers, Apprentices, David) (4:16)
CLR 4189-1 · HMV/Electrola EJ 285
- [9] Act III - Silentium! Silentium! (Apprentices, All the People) (4:03)
CLR 4190-1A · HMV/Electrola EJ 285
- [10] Act III - Verachtet mir die Meister nicht (Sachs, The People) (6:18)
CLR 4194-1A/4195-1 · HMV/Electrola EJ 286
- [11] Unpublished - Jerum! Jerum! (Sachs, Beckmesser, Walther, Eva) (3:16)*
CLR 4073-1 · Previously unpublished
- [12] Unpublished - Sieh, Evchen! Dacht ich's doch, wo sie blieb! (Sachs, Eva) (3:42)*
CLR 4075-1 [part] · Previously unpublished

Friedrich Schorr (Sachs); Elfriede Marherr-Wagner (Eva); Robert Hutt (Walther);
Leo Schützendorf (Beckmesser); Emanuel List (Pogner); Karl Jöken (David);
Lydia Kindermann (Magdalene); *Fritz Wolff (Walther); *Eduard Kandl (Beckmesser)

Berlin State Opera Orchestra and Chorus Leo Blech

Producer and Audio Restoration
Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn

Front cover artwork based on a
photograph of **Friedrich Schorr** as **Sachs**

Rear cover photo **Friedrich Schorr** from
the George Grantham Bain collection

Recorded during the performances of *29
April and 22 May 1928 in the Theater
unter der Linden, Berlin

Total duration: **79:50**

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