



BEECHAM

CONDUCTS BRAHMS & DELIUS



The *Academic Festival Overture* (German: Akademische Festouvertüre), Op. 80, by Johannes Brahms, was one of a pair of contrasting concert overtures — the other being the *Tragic Overture*, Op. 81, written to balance it as its pair. Brahms composed the Academic Festival Overture during the summer of 1880 as a musical "thank you" to the University of Breslau, which had awarded him an honorary doctorate the previous year. Initially, Brahms had contented himself with sending a simple handwritten note of acknowledgement to the University, since he loathed the public fanfare of celebrity. However, the conductor Bernard Scholz, who had nominated him for the degree, convinced him that protocol required him to make a grander gesture of gratitude. The University expected nothing less than a musical offering from the composer. "Compose a fine symphony for us!" he wrote Brahms. "But well orchestrated, old boy, not too uniformly thick!"

The *Symphony No. 2 in D major*, Op. 73, was composed by Johannes Brahms in the summer of 1877 during a visit to Pörtlach am Wörthersee, a town in the Austrian province of Carinthia. Its composition was brief in comparison with the fifteen years it took Brahms to complete his First Symphony. The cheerfulness of the symphony is akin to the pastoral mood of Beethoven's Sixth. Brahms's First Symphony contrasted because of its sombre C minor tonality. Mischievously, the composer wrote to his publisher on November 22, 1877, that the symphony's tone is melancholy, and that the score must sound like mourning. While the work is neither tragic nor especially dramatic, the dynamics of the first two movements is largely piano and reaches forte in minor scales. The last two movements are lighter in dynamics and briefer. The subtle interplay of contrasting melodies overlapping and being passed around throughout the instruments of the orchestra allow the conductor to dictate the mood by emphasizing different parts.

Delius' *North Country Sketches* was composed in 1914, and is one of his few compositions frankly inspired by the English countryside. The four movements are mood pictures of the varying seasons in Yorkshire, and the work was premiered by Beecham in May 1915. It has been suggested that their location may have been inspired by a meeting between Delius and the Brontë sisters, though this may well have taken place shortly after the music had been written.

Brahms notes and more: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brahms> *Full scores of the Brahms works are available for free download at The International Music Score Library Project:* <http://imslp.org>

Recording and restoration notes

The two Brahms recordings, made in full stereo in 1956 and 1958, were taken from very clean later US pressings on the Seraphim label, and despite some minor vinyl surface inconsistencies the transfer was straightforward. XR remastering has succeeded in adding extra clarity and immediacy to the sound.

The earlier recording of Delius' *North Country Sketches* was made for 78rpm discs but onto tape in 1949, and this transfer was taken from a near-mint Philips white label test pressing for a later LP reissue. I was able to expand out considerably the top end of the frequency range, though this treatment did reveal some occasional treble inconsistencies in the tape which had to be rectified, as well as bringing up hiss levels slightly. I have attempted to strike a sensible balance between background hiss reduction and treble clarity.

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FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM

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BEECHAM

CONDUCTS BRAHMS AND DELIUS

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA



BRAHMS

SYMPHONY NO. 2 IN D, OP. 73

ACADEMIC FESTIVAL OVERTURE, OP. 80

DELIUS

NORTH COUNTRY SKETCHES

STUDIO RECORDINGS FROM 1949, 1956 AND 1958

Beecham conducts Brahms & Delius

1 BRAHMS Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80 (10:43)

Recorded in stereo in Abbey Road Studio 1, London, 29th November, 1956
First issued as UK Columbia LP 33CX1429

BRAHMS Symphony No. 2 in D, OP.73

2 1st mvt. - *Allegro non troppo* (14:10)

3 2nd mvt. - *Adagio non troppo* (9:01)

4 3rd mvt. - *Allegretto grazioso (quasi andantino)* (5:44)

5 4th mvt. - *Allegro con spirito* (8:54)

Recorded in stereo in Abbey Road Studio 1, London, 1st December, 1958
First issued as HMV LP ASD 348

DELIUS North Country Sketches

6 1. Autumn - the wind sighs in the trees (7:11)

7 2. Winter Landscape (4:02)

8 3. Dance (5:45)

9 4. The March of Spring (7:30)

Recorded in mono, 14th February, 1949

First issued as UK Columbia 78s LX 1399-1401

Matrix numbers CAX 11067-11072

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham



PASC 263

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Transfers from Seraphim stereo LP
S-60083 (Brahms) and Philips mono
LP GL5691 (white-label test pressing)
(Delius)

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of **Sir Thomas Beecham**

The Delius recording is presented
here with Pristine Audio's acclaimed
subtle Ambient Stereo treatment.
This is fully mono-compatible and
can be easily cancelled using the
mono switch on your amplifier

Total duration: **73:00**

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