

# Efrem Zimbalist

## Brahms Sibelius Violin Concertos

**Efrem Zimbalist, Sr.** (21 April 1889 or 1890 – February 22, 1985) was one of the world's most prominent concert violinists, as well as a composer, teacher, conductor and a long-time director of the Curtis Institute of Music. At age 12 he entered the Saint Petersburg Conservatory and studied under Leopold Auer. He graduated from the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1907 after winning a gold medal and the Rubinstein Prize, and by age 21 was considered one of the world's greatest violinists.

After graduation he debuted in Berlin (playing the Brahms concerto) and London in 1907 and in the U.S. in 1911, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He then settled in the U.S. He did much to popularize the performance of early music. In 1917, he was elected as an honorary member of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, the national fraternity for men in music, by the fraternity's Alpha Chapter at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. In 1928, Zimbalist began teaching at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. He was director of the school from 1941 to 1968. His pupils included such distinguished musicians as Aaron Rosand, Harold Wippler, Oscar Shumsky, Felix Sladkin, Shmuel Ashkenasi, and Hidecuro Suzuki.

He retired as a violinist in 1949, but returned in 1952 to give the first performance of the Violin Concerto by Gian Carlo Menotti, which is dedicated to him. He retired again in 1955. He served as a juror of the International Tchaikovsky Competition in 1962 and 1966.

*From Wikipedia biography of Zimbalist - reproduced in full on our website*

### Producer's Note

For all his importance in the musical world as a violinist, composer and head of Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music, it is remarkable that Efrem Zimbalist left only a single commercial recording of any violin concerto – an acoustic Bach Double with Kreisler, backed by a string quartet. We are particularly fortunate, then, that these two broadcast recordings exist. While the Brahms has been issued before on LP and CD, the Sibelius appears here for the first time in a commercial release.

The source for the Brahms was a CD-R copied from a tape transfer of the original broadcast acetates. Although there are some intermittent problems, the basic sound quality is notably above average for broadcast transcriptions of that era. There is a wealth of audible detail, including Koussevitzky's spoken "Bravo" at the end of Zimbalist's sublime performance of the second movement.

Most of the Sibelius was taken from an open-reel tape containing rough, unjoined transfers of eight 78 rpm acetate sides. Due to a defect in this source, however, the first side (up to 4:07 on Track 5) came from a CD-R copy of a tape transfer of another set of acetates. I have tried to match the sound on the two sources the best I could, and have also attempted to correct the severe pitch fluctuations which plagued both sets of originals. **Mark Obert-Thorn**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT [WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM](http://WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM)  
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## Brahms

### Violin Concerto

in D major

Boston Symphony Orchestra

Serge Koussevitzky

## Sibelius

### Violin Concerto

in D minor

The Cleveland Orchestra

Rudolf Ringwall

Live broadcast recordings 1944 & 1946

**Obert-Thorn**

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