



Oskar Fried Beethoven Symphony No. 9



Oskar Fried (August 10, 1871 – July 5, 1941) was a German conductor and composer. An admirer of Gustav Mahler, Fried was the first conductor to record a Mahler symphony. Fried also held the distinction of being the first foreign conductor to perform in Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution, Fried eventually left his homeland to work in the Soviet Union after the political rise of Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party, and became a Soviet citizen in 1940.

Born in Berlin, the son of a Jewish shopkeeper, he worked as a clown, a stable boy and a dog trainer before studying composition with Iwan Knorr (1891-92, Hoch Conservatory) and Engelbert Humperdinck (as private student) in Frankfurt. He later moved to Düsseldorf to study painting and art history. After a spell in Paris, he returned to Berlin in 1898 to study counterpoint with Xaver Scharwenka. The performance of his composition *Das trunkene Lied* ("the drunken song") for chorus and orchestra brought Fried his first public success and led to his appointment in 1904 as the conductor of a Berlin choral society.

Fried first met Gustav Mahler in 1905. The meeting resulted in an invitation to conduct Mahler's "Resurrection" Symphony in Berlin in November 1905 (Otto Klemperer led the offstage band during this performance). The next year Fried introduced Russia to Mahler's music when he performed the same work in St Petersburg. From 1907 to 1910 he directed a choral society known as the Sternscher Gesangverein in Berlin. In 1913 Fried conducted the Berlin Philharmonic in the second performance of Mahler's Ninth Symphony.

In 1922 Fried went to the USSR as the first foreign conductor invited to perform after the Russian Revolution, and was greeted by Lenin on the station platform. In 1924 Fried made the first recording of any Mahler symphony, the Second, with the Berlin Staatskapelle in a performance that has been praised as "remarkably successful" and a "highly adventurous undertaking for an acoustic recording" which required "careful planning and experimentation". That same year Fried also made the first recording of any complete Bruckner symphony: his Seventh.

Driven away from Germany by the anti-Semitism of the Nazi regime, in 1934 Fried left Germany for the Georgian city of Tbilisi in the Soviet Union. He conducted the Tbilisi opera and later the Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, eventually becoming a Soviet citizen. He died in Moscow in 1941.

Notes from Wikipedia

Producer's Note

The source for the present transfer was a set of French Polydor pressings. The exact date of recording is not known; the "Mechan. Copt." date given on the discs is 1928, although some discographic sources claim it was made the previous year. Some of the loudest choral passages overloaded the early microphones, causing a couple moments of sputtering which are inherent in the original recording.

Mark Obert-Thorn

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Oskar Fried conducts



Beethoven Symphony No. 9 'Choral' in D minor, Op. 125



Lotte Leonard soprano
Jenny Sonnenberg contralto
Eugen Transky tenor
Wilhelm Guttman bass

Bruno Kittel Choir
Berlin State Opera Orchestra
Studio Recording · 1928

Obert-Thorn

Producer and Audio Restoration
Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn

Front cover artwork based on a
photograph of Oskar Fried

Recorded in 1928 in Berlin
First issued on Gramophone/Polydor
66657 through 66663

1st movement matrices:
633 bm, 634 bm and 635 bm

2nd movement matrices:
588 ¼ bm and 636 bm

3rd movement matrices:
637 bm, 638 bm and 639 ½ bm

4th movement matrices:
586 ½ bm, 587 bm, 586 ½ bm,
584 ½ bm, 585 ½ bm and 587 ½ bm

Total duration: 62:05

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AUDIO

Fried conducts Beethoven

BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125 "CHORAL"

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso (14:03)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Molto vivace (10:09)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Adagio molto e cantabile – Andante moderato (14:05)
- 4 4th mvt. - Presto – Allegro assai (23:48)

Lotte Leonard soprano

Jenny Sonnenberg contralto

Eugen Transky tenor

Wilhelm Guttman bass

Bruno Kittel Choir Bruno Kittel

Berlin State Opera Orchestra Oskar Fried