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Furtwängler conducts Brahms

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Generally speaking, the basic elements of the solo concerto are contrast and display. In the solo concertos of Brahms, however, these qualities are minimised since Brahms' approach is essentially symphonic. Indeed, the solo part is so closely woven into the orchestral texture that the two are virtually one. Particularly is this true of the *Violin Concerto*, in which the solo violin is often hard put to it to make itself clearly heard against the orchestra. Hence, of course, Von Bulow's *lou mot* that it is a concerto against the violin.

The orchestral part of this concerto is so vital and important that one might say that it is as much a conductor's piece as it is a violinist's. Perfect agreement between the two is essential, for the conductor is no mere follower or accompanist: he controls the course of the music just as much as the soloist does. This new recording of Yehudi Menuhin with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra under Furtwängler seems to me to be the result of such an agreement. The balancing and dove-tailing of the solo and orchestral parts are accomplished to perfection, and, what is more, I am glad to note that Furtwängler faithfully observes Brahms's fairly lavish dynamic indications.

During the last few years I have had some hard things to say about Menuhin's playing, which too often shows the signs of wear and tear through this ridiculous and unnecessary fashion of popular artists serving their public like ill-paid and overworked waiters. I wish Menuhin would always play as well as he does for this recording, which is a really careful and thoughtful performance. His playing of the first movement is fine, spacious, and intense. In the slow movement his tone and phrasing do full justice to the poetry of the music, and the emotional expression is properly controlled. The *Finale* is thrown off deftly and with the right amount of abandon.

R.H., The Gramophone April 1950 - *excerpts from review of Violin Concerto*

The present recording has been made from a relay which RIAS, Berlin, put out from a live concert - Furtwängler's memorable last Berlin performance on the 27th April 1954. Frank Thies, who edited a selection of Furtwängler's lectures in 1964, refers to the fact that as late as May 1954, after conducting Brahms's *Third* in Cologne, Furtwängler told him that at last he believed he really understood this masterpiece. These words used by Furtwängler toward the end of his life may be taken to show that the *3rd Symphony* had been harder for him fully to comprehend than Brahms's other works, so that he had taken far longer in discovering how to present it to perfection...

Werner Bollett (trans. J. Coombs) - *excerpt from sketchnote to DGG LP 2535 163, Symphony No. 3*

Transfer notes

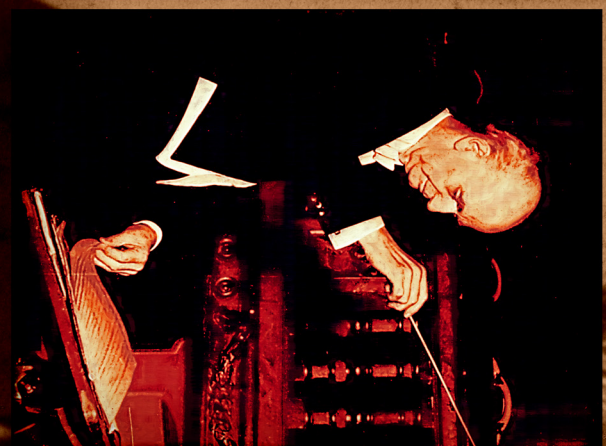
The main technical challenge here, and one which has been met only up to a point, was the tonal "grittiness" imposed on certain instruments, most especially Menuhin's violin, by EMI's primitive tape machines during the recording of the *Violin Concerto*. It's a form of very fine flutter which is exceptionally difficult to lessen and which has always marred this recording. This aside, both recordings offer particularly fine sound quality following XR remastering. I've also been able to fix a marked jump up in pitch at 13:15 in the first movement of the *Violin Concerto*, suggesting the joining of two takes from machines running at different speeds, as well as other pitch anomalies. **AR**

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Furtwängler

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Brahms
Symphony No. 3
Violin Concerto

Yehudi Menuhin Violin
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
Lucerne Festival Orchestra
Live & studio recordings, 1954/1949

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on photographs of
Wilhelm Furtwängler and **Brahms**

Symphony No. 3

Transfer from DGG LP 2535 163

Recorded live, 27 April 1954
at Titania-Palast, Berlin by RIAS Berlin

Violin Concerto

Transfer from EMI LP SG 153-53666 M

Recorded 7 October 1949, Lucerne
First issued as HMV DB.2100-3 & DBS.210904
Matrix Nos. 2ZA63-71

Total duration: 76:24

Furtwängler Brahms

BRAHMS Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90

- 1 1st mv't. - **Allegro con brio** (10:37)
- 2 2nd mv't. - **Andante** (9:52)
- 3 3rd mv't. - **Poco allegretto** (6:33)
- 4 4th mv't. - **Allegro** (9:47)