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Toscanini

conducts Brahms

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The reappearance of Toscanini's recordings of all the Brahms symphonies on the R.C.A. label is a most welcome event, for they should never be unavailable. As commercial ramifications are the only reason for their ever being off the market I had intended to give them what I believe is called in book circles a "reviewer's reading," a skim through. But, started on the first, I could not leave these ardent, blazing performances alone. They are wonderful and it is certain that, whatever the claims of other conductors, no Brahms lover should be without these. On their new label they sound very well and one need not fear the unpleasant sound associated with many Toscanini recordings, only the 3rd being less good...

T.H., Gramophone May 1959 - *excerpts from review of Symphonies Nos. 1-4*

When they were made I do not know, but despite the great man's advancing years they are as full of fire and finesse as ever. (I am irresistibly reminded of Widor, at the age of nearly ninety, ripping his way through the finale of his Fifth Symphony for H.M.V.). The meticulous care over every detail, the beautiful phrasing and the breadth of line, the rhythmic bite, are hallmarks of the master. It has been claimed that, as an Italian, Toscanini is not the ideal interpreter of Brahms' typically Teutonic genius; but the Second Symphony elicits from him a perfectly appropriate lyricism, and there is not the smallest suggestion of stylistic inpropriety in the more virile first. Besides, remembering Furtwängler's wild exaggerations, is the German spirit necessarily more en rapport? There are, needless to say, none of these distortions here, but instead a choice of tempi which is made to seem inevitable: I would draw attention to the perfect tempo-transitions in the third movement of No. 2. The "bell-chime" horn tune and the trombones' chorale-like passage in the finale of No. 1 are taken slower than usual, and later in the movement the speeds do vary somewhat, but there is the evidence of Brahms' markings to justify this. In the orchestra's playing there is much of great beauty—I instance the glowing cello tone in the Adagio of No. 2 and the truly *otto noz* quality of the start of the finale; and indeed the only real flaw I can find anywhere is the out-of-tune held A on trumpet and horn at the close of the first movement of the same symphony. Students of Brahms scores will notice with interest that in No. 1 Toscanini suppresses the viola-and-timpani triplets at the two breakoffs a couple of dozen bars before the end...

L.S., Gramophone October 1952 - *excerpts from review of Symphonies Nos. 1 & 2*

Transfer notes

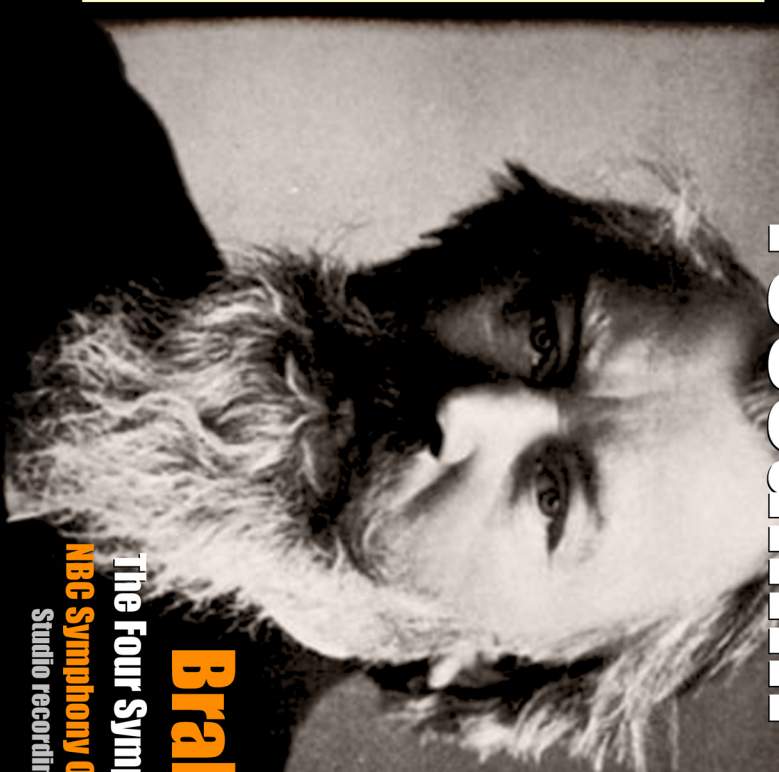
It comes as no surprise to find Toscanini's studio LP recordings of Brahms' four symphonies still in RCA's catalogue. Alas the sound quality, whilst adequate for the first two symphonies, slips dramatically for the *Third* and *Fourth*, and all have anomalies throughout. This remastering aims to set the balance straight, to raise first the sound quality of Symphonies 1 and 2, and then to bring Symphonies 3 and 4 up to this same new standard. Careful application of the XR remastering system has achieved this and more - Toscanini's magnificent recordings of the Brahms symphonic canon have never sounded as wonderful as this! I've also been able to fix some pitch anomalies, most acute in the *Third Symphony*, where both the second half of the 1st movement and the entire *finale* were considerably sharp. **AR**

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Brahms
The Four Symphonies
NBC Symphony Orchestra
Studio recordings, 1951/52

Toscanini Brahms Symphonies

Disc One

BRAHMS Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68

- 1 1st mvmt. - Un poco sostenuto - Allegro (12:02)
- 2 2nd mvmt. - Andante sostenuto (8:20)
- 3 3rd mvmt. - Un poco allegretto e grazioso (4:32)
- 4 4th mvmt. - Adagio - Più andante - Allegro non troppo ma con brio (17:01)

BRAHMS Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73

- 5 1st mvmt. - Allegro non troppo (14:38)
6 2nd mvmt. - Adagio non troppo (8:32)
7 3rd mvmt. - Allegretto grazioso (quasi andantino) (5:30)
8 4th mvmt. - Allegro con spirito (8:57)

Disc Two

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

- 1 1st mvmt. - **Allegro con brio** (13:53)
- 2 2nd mvmt. - **Andante** (9:37)
- 3 3rd mvmt. - **Poco allegretto** (6:57)
- 4 4th mvmt. - **Allegro** (9:17)

BRAHMS Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98

- 5 1st mvmt. - Allegro non troppo (11:06)
6 2nd mvmt. - Andante moderato (10:30)
7 3rd mvmt. - Allegro giocoso (6:17)
8 4th mvmt. - Allegro energico e passionato (9:09)

NBC Symphony Orchestra Arturo Toscanini

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a photograph of **Brahms**

Symphony No. 1

Recorded 6 November 1951
Carnegie Hall, New York City
First issued as RCA LM-1702

Symphony No. 2

Recorded 11 February 1952
Carnegie Hall, New York City
First issued as RCA LM-1731

Symphony No. 3

Recorded 4 November 1952
Carnegie Hall, New York City
First issued as RCA LM-1836

Symphony No. 4

Recorded 3 December 1951
Carnegie Hall, New York City
First issued as RCA LM-1713

Total duration: 2hr 36:17

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