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Bruno Walter

conducts Mahler's Symphony No. 5

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In THE GRAMOPHONE for November, 1953, I wrote about this symphony at some length, expressing in general a degree of doubt as to its total coherence. The enormous structure, however, could scarcely be given a better chance of making its multitudinous points than on this new set of discs, which are first class in every way. Walter takes very great care, in particular, over accentuation, over the shaping of every one of Mahler's phrases. The result is often to propel the music when it stands most in need of propulsion: not all performances disclose a rhythmic shape to a cloud of notes as clearly as this one. Particularly does the Scherzo benefit; and the alert reading results not merely in a winning effect but also in a practical advantage—the Adagietto can then be accommodated on the same side, leaving the whole third side of the set available for the Finale, with obvious engineering advantages.

Throughout the players respond readily not only to Walter's forward urge, but also to all the other demands of the music. The brass are on top of their form, with superbly confident trumpets and rich-sounding trombones; so are the strings, with dash, unanimity, and, particularly in the Adagietto, a very full quality of tone. This movement does to some extent lack a clear reproduction of the important harp part but the previous Scherzo always makes clear the at least equally important solo horn part, here most beautifully played.

The recording is sonorous, even in the severest of Mahler's climaxes, which it approaches without flinching. The sonority does not, save exceptionally, exclude clarity; and it establishes beyond a doubt the superiority of this version of the symphony to the earlier Nixa set. That was very clearly recorded (again, curiously, except as to that elusive harp part), but the overall sound was not as warm as that of the new Philips; nor did Scherchen achieve quite the felicities of phrasing, or, in places, the forward urge of Walter.

M. M. *The Gramophone*, December 1957 - *excerpt, review of Philips LP issue*

Transfer notes

This recording, made at the end of the 78rpm direct-to-disc era, both benefits and suffers as a result, as has been clear from previous issues. The Philips LP referred to in our Gramophone review struggled with a lack of clarity, especially at the top end, whilst later CD issues have suffered a surfeit of surface noise. No previous issue has successfully tackled the somewhat constricted sonics of the original recordings in the manner that this new 32-bit XR remastering has succeeded in doing, unlocking the broad sweep both of Mahler and Walter's collective visions. Rebalancing the orchestral tone has revealed a fuller and more glorious sound than I had dared to anticipate in a remastering process that has taken on numerous incarnations since I began it eight months ago. **A.R.**

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

conducts MAHLER

Symphony No. 5

Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York
Studio recording, 1947

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MAHLER SYMPHONY No. 5
WALTER, PHILHARMONIC-SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK

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MAHLER SYMPHONY No. 5
WALTER, PHILHARMONIC-SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of
Bruno Walter

Symphony No. 5

Recorded 10 February 1947
Carnegie Hall, New York
First issued as Columbia 78rpm album MM 718

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Mahler Symphony No. 5

- 1 1st mvt. - Trauermarsch (11:47)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Stürmisch bewegt, mit größter Vehemenz (12:42)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Scherzo (15:14)
- 4 4th mvt. - Adagio (7:42)
- 5 5th mvt. - Rondo - Finale (14:04)

Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York
Bruno Walter