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Bruno Walter

Bruckner Symphony No. 9

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Readers of the correspondence columns of *The Listener* will have noticed a recent set-to between anti- and pro-Brucknerites, hotly contesting whether or not Bruckner was tedious. What nobody thought to say was that, more than with most composers, his music depends on his interpreters: lack of sympathy with his leviathan scores, or misunderstanding or wilful disregard of their markings (always assuming they are the right scores to start with, and not "improvements" by well-meaning editors) can easily result in performances which stress the naivete, the vast leisureliness, the structural weaknesses to an intolerable degree. When, on the other hand, a Bruno Walter takes charge, the music can flow with an unruffled assurance, a sense of coherence and quiet purpose, a direct eloquence which utterly transforms the work. So sensitive is Walter to the ebb-and-flow of Bruckner's tides of thought that even in such vast movements as the opening one here, or the *Adagio* which represents the apotheosis of his humble lifelong glorification of God, one forgets to become impatient with their length but is absorbed into the rich romantic texture slowly unfolded. The Scherzo in this performance is taken at an unusually steady pace, which slightly lessens the contrast of tempi intended; but it is so meticulously played, and so lightly, that the effect comes to seem entirely convincing. The Columbia Symphony Orchestra plays admirably throughout, responsive to Walter's every direction; and the result is a truly noble reading. After this *Adagio* indeed any finale, had it ever been completed, might well have come as an anti-climax. The recording is outstandingly good.

L.S. The Gramophone, June 1961 - review of Philips LP issue

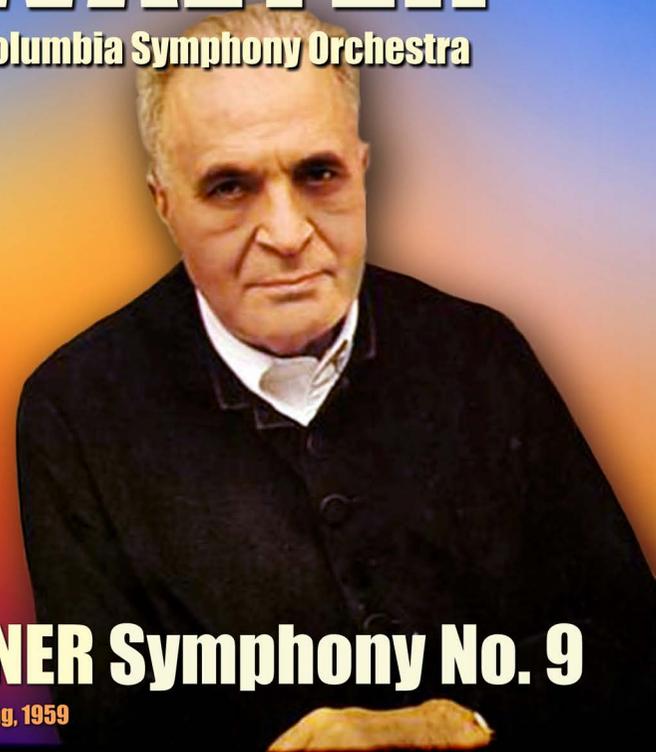
Transfer notes

Bruno Walter made three studio recordings of music by Bruckner: the 4th, 7th and 9th Symphonies. Each was recorded during the very last years of his life, with the Columbia Symphony Orchestra (generally believed to consist largely of the Los Angeles Philharmonic) in stereo. As with the two Mahler recordings of the same provenance, released earlier this year as Pristine PASC376, these recordings were well made but - to modern ears at least - have something of a sonic veil over them. This may indeed not be apparent - until one compares the Sony/Columbia releases with these new 32-bit XR-remastered transfers. Suddenly one discovers an immediacy, a fullness of tone, the rasp of the brass, the rumble of the deep bass, the sheer vitality of Walter's orchestra and performance conveyed as never before. The recordings were of course taped, and I've managed to correct some minor pitch drifts throughout the recording, as well as reduce some of the hiss inherent in any analogue recording. But what will impact most on the listener here will be the massive, three-dimensional impact of the performance, the precise detail in Walter's direction, and an unprecedented clarity of sound. A.R.

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WALTER

Columbia Symphony Orchestra



BRUCKNER Symphony No. 9

Stereo studio recording, 1959

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BRUCKNER SYMPHONY No. 9 IN D MINOR
WALTER, COLUMBIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a photograph of
Bruno Walter

Bruckner Symphony No. 9

Recording producer: **Fritz Ganss**
Recording Engineer: **Horst Lindner**
Recorded 16/18 November 1959
American Legion Hall
Hollywood, California

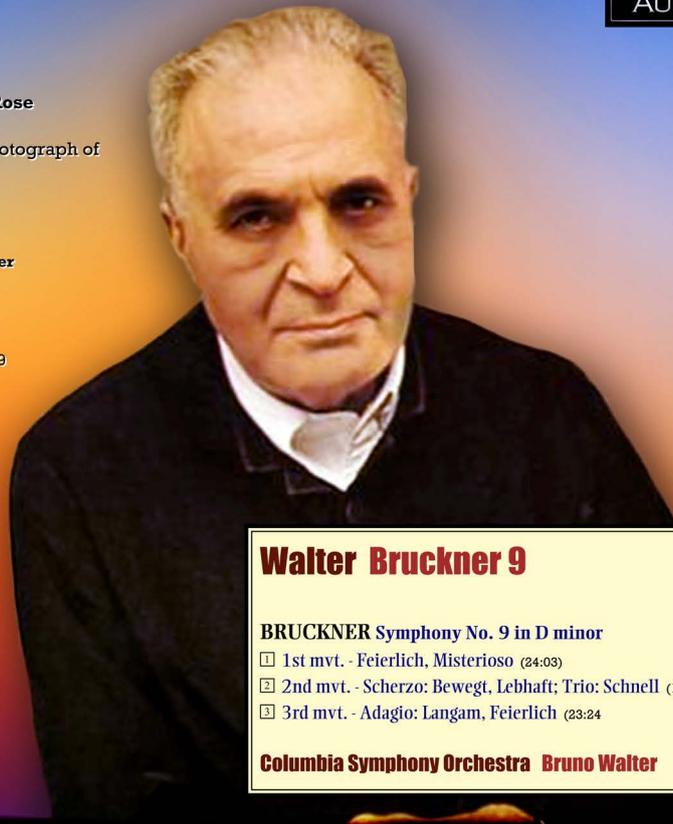
Issued in the UK as Philips SABL179

Total duration: **59:03**

BRUCKNER SYMPHONY No. 9 IN D MINOR
WALTER, COLUMBIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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Walter Bruckner 9

BRUCKNER Symphony No. 9 in D minor

- 1 1st mvt. - Feierlich, Misterioso (24:03)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Scherzo: Bewegt, Lebhaft; Trio: Schnell (11:36)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Adagio: Langsam, Feierlich (23:24)

Columbia Symphony Orchestra Bruno Walter

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