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HORENSTEIN *Mahler and Wagner*

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STEREO

A DEDICATED PERFORMANCE OF MAHLER'S 'EIGHTH'

Mahler wrote of his cosmically-planned Eighth Symphony that in it the universe begins to vibrate and to sound. On Friday the Albert Hall was made more or less to vibrate with sound by 750 voices and instrumentalists engaged in a presentation of the work to an assembly which filled the enormous place from floor to topmost gallery. In the chorus were humans of all ages, children choring like cherubim, more or less; venerable basses, and young girls at the spring of life. Eight soloists sustained the revolving world of Mahler's aspirations standing there like supporting pillars. Jascha Horenstein controlled the apocalyptic structure firmly and purposefully, avoiding the occasional chasms and glimpses into vacancy, and scaling the heights without haste or waste of breadth.

At the end, the audience broke into tumultuous acclamation. Seldom, if ever, have I known in an English concert hall so tremendous a demonstration as this. No doubt Mahler's apotheosis of heaven-storming brass and bells, heaven-arching sopranos and infant warblings, was partly responsible for the outbreak, but throughout the performance attention had been riveted and breathless, so we can assume that the roars of 'Bravo' signified more than excitement due to an assault on the senses.

Horenstein encompassed the work with simple, impressive technical mastery. He indulged in no histrionic gestures. He did not attempt to persuade us that he was sharing with Mahler the labour pains of creation. He put himself devotedly at Mahler's service, had faith in the music, and he had patience. It was a dedicated piece of conducting; indeed, the performance itself was dedicated and a great credit to all taking part. The young folk singing Mahler to Goethe's German from the closing scene of 'Faust' will surely remember this concert all their lives.

Neville Cardus, *The Guardian*, 23rd March 1959 (excerpt)

Producer's Note

I was urged by the conductor's cousin, Misha Horenstein, to tackle the BBC's splendid experimental stereo recording of Mahler's 8th Symphony, made with a single stereo microphone set-up in the vast, acoustically-untamed space of the Royal Albert Hall, in the hope that XR remastering might bring a greater focus and a better sense of the vastness of the forces employed. "I can't praise it highly enough. The difference is immediate from the opening bars, where the organ hits you where it should, in the stomach, but the gain is evident throughout. This is especially true of the bass line, which now has the depth and weight missing in the [previous issue]. Your remake also compliments the vertical and horizontal spaces of the Albert Hall, bringing the sound forward as though you are sitting in better seats than before..." came the response, to which I find little to add (beyond noting the high number of coughs I had to remove!).

By contrast the Wagner, whilst derived from excellent 1962 studio recordings engineered by legendary Decca man Kenneth Wilkinson, suffered from major pitch problems in the Siegfried Idyll, which dropped gradually from an initial A=443Hz to A=430Hz over the course of the recording, the full correction of which has only recently become technically possible. These recordings, too, have benefited from the added fullness of sound brought by XR remastering that so pleased Mr. Horenstein in the Mahler. **Andrew Rose**

Horenstein

MAHLER Symphony No. 8 "Symphony of a Thousand"

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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WAGNER

Der Fliegende Holländer - Overture
Tannhäuser - Bacchanale
Siegfried Idyll

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Live and studio recordings, 1959 and 1962

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MAHLER SYMPHONY NO. 8 - WAGNER ORCHESTRAL MUSIC
HORENSTEIN, LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

HORENSTEIN *Mahler & Wagner*

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Disc One

- ❑ WAGNER Der fliegende Holländer - Overture (10:22)
 - ❑ WAGNER Tannhäuser - Bacchanale (13:21)
 - ❑ WAGNER Siegfried Idyll (16:11)
- Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Jascha Horenstein

Wagner Orchestral Music
Recording producer: Charles Gerhardt
Recording Engineer: Kenneth Wilkinson
Recorded 29-30 September 1962
Walthamstow Town Hall

MAHLER Symphony No. 8 in E flat Major ("Symphony of a Thousand")

- ❑ Part I - Hymnus: Veni Creator Spiritus (23:25)

Disc Two

- ❑ Part II - Schlusszene aus 'Faust' (57:54)

Mahler Symphony No. 8
Recorded 20 March 1959
Royal Albert Hall, London

Total duration: 2hr 1:13

Joyce Barker (sop.I) - Magna Peccatrix
Beryl Hatt (sop.II) - Mater Gloriosa
Agnes Giebel (sop.III) - Una Poenitentium
Kirsten Meyer (alt.I) - Mulier Samaritana
Helen Watts (alt.II) - Maria Aegyptiaca
Kenneth Neate (ten.) - Doctor Marianus
Alfred Orda (bar.) - Pater Ecstasticus
Arnold van Mill (bass) - Pater Profundus

BBC Chorus; BBC Choral Society; Goldsmiths' Choral Union; Hampstead Choral Society;
Emanuel School Boys' Choir; Orpington Junior Singers

Musical Associate: Berthold Goldschmidt

London Symphony Orchestra

Hugh Maguire, leader; Charles Spinks, organ

Jascha Horenstein *conductor*

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