

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO
PASC 485

Bruno Walter

conducts Brahms, Volume 1

Pristine
XR

Bruno Walter began his Brahms cycle with the Philharmonic-Symphony last night in Carnegie Hall, and gave us a wonderful concert. He played Brahms without the slightest affectation or mannerism, with all his heart, and a simplicity and nobility of spirit which matched the music.

It was a great pleasure to hear the scores played without any attempt to modify or beautify them. The rugged and melodic Brahms, whose orchestration is quite often stringy and unsilly or glistening, fell upon our ears, "echt" Deutsch and "echt" Brahms. Perhaps this is too provincial a way to put it. The universality of the music rather frowns upon that.

On the other hand, the very grandeur and universality of this immortal music comes from its soil and from the consciousness of an artist who was profoundly German in his consciousness and his devotion to the traditions of the German symphonic art. Mr. Walter, in arranging and finding the almost ideal tempi and inflection for this music, pointed out something else to us, which is that Brahms, popularly conceived as the neo-classic master of his period—and ours too, for that matter—is not only a romantic composer, but, in the appropriate circumstances, is to be interpreted as such.

This refers especially to the reading of the C minor symphony, which ended the program, and the contrast between its interpretation and that of the "Tragic" overture which opened it. In the "Tragic" overture Brahms is completely a classicist. There is mysteriously communicated, in this music, the tragedy of human existence, and the grandeur of destiny. The style is singularly austere, impersonal, like destiny. There is no self-pity, no catervauling at fate. Wherefore, Brahms is here a classicist not only in form and workmanship,

The form of the great C minor symphony is also classic. The symphonic methods are those of the classical masters of composition in whose footsteps Brahms was both proud of and also diffident about reading. But actually, in this work, he is a wide-eyed romanticist — as was Beethoven in a certain other C minor symphony. And Mr. Walter read the music in the flaming romantic spirit — "sturm und drang" — with all sorts of grand rhetoric. He did not hesitate for an instant to retard or accelerate, or entirely differentiate the contrasting phrases of the introduction, in the instance of the lyric phrases which immediately follow the initial motive, heard over the pounding drums.

Later on, the way in which he maintained the pace of the choral melody which opens the finale, after the prelude with a horn-call, was a master-stroke of classic architecture. And this finale was tonal drama of the most thrilling kind. We need not particularize farther. The transcending value of this concert was the conviction, the rugged strength and unfeverish, unmodern, absolutely real faith and emotion which vibrated in every measure.

Olin Downes The New York Times, 19 January 1951 (excerpt)

Producer's Note

This series is based around what survives of Bruno Walter's fabulous 1951 series of Brahms concerts with the New York Philharmonic, together with other live performances which either fill gaps in the 1951 recordings or, in the case of the *German Requiem* (Vol. 3), add to the 1951 programme. A number of major recordings, including two of the symphonies, have never been issued before; in other cases we have gained access to sonically superior sources to those used in previous releases. There is some variation in sound quality across the recordings, some of which have required extensive repair and restoration. What shines throughout is the fabulous musicality of these truly historic concert accounts of Brahms' music, as given by Walter and the New York Philharmonic. **Andrew Rose**

Pristine
XR
PASC 485

Walter

conducts brahms, volume 1

symphony no. 1
symphony no. 2
double concerto
song of destiny
tragic overture
hungarian dance no. 17

john corrigliano, violin
leonard rose, cello
philharmonic-symphony
orchestra of new york
hollywood bowl orchestra
live recordings, 1947-1954

walter

conducts brahms, volume 1

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO
PASC 485

CD1 [1] **BRAHMS Schicksalslied** (Song of Destiny), Op. 54 (15:07)
Hugo Strelitzer Choir • Hollywood Bowl Orchestra

[2] **BRAHMS Tragic Overture**, Op. 81 (12:14)

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

[3] 1st mvt. - Un poco sostenuto - Allegro (13:13)

[4] 2nd mvt. - Andante sostenuto (8:31)

[5] 3rd mvt. - Un poco allegretto e grazioso (4:39)

[6] 4th mvt. - Adagio - Allegro non troppo, ma con brio (16:12)

CD2 [1] **BRAHMS Hungarian Dance No. 17** in F-sharp minor (3:25)

BRAHMS Double Concerto for violin and cello in A minor, Op. 102

[2] 1st mvt. - Allegro (15:36)

[3] 2nd mvt. - Andante (8:34)

[4] 3rd mvt. - Vivace non troppo (8:26)

John Corigliano, violin • Leonard Rose, cello

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

[5] 1st mvt. - Allegro non troppo (14:54)

[6] 2nd mvt. - Adagio non troppo (10:45)

[7] 3rd mvt. - Allegretto grazioso (quasi andantino) (5:19)

[8] 4th mvt. - Allegro con spirito (8:47)

Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York

Bruno Walter, conductor

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on
photographs of Walter & Brahms

*Schicksalslied: 7 October 1947
Tragic Overture: 19 December 1954
Symphony No. 1: 21 January 1951
Hungarian Dance: 4 February 1951
Double Concerto: 4 February 1951
Symphony No. 2: 4 February 1951

All performed at Carnegie Hall, New York
except *Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles

Total duration: 2hr 25:42

For our full catalogue visit
www.pristineclassical.com

© 2016 Pristine Audio

PRISTINE
AUDIO