

Erich Leinsdorf (*né* Landauer) was born in Vienna on February 4th 1912. He studied music from an early age, later taking up conducting at the Salzburg Mozarteum, the University of Vienna and the Vienna Academy of Music. During the Salzburg Festivals of 1934 through 1937, he served as an assistant to both Arturo Toscanini and Bruno Walter. At the end of the latter year, he accepted a position at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, eventually becoming an American citizen in 1942. Upon the death of Artur Bodanzky in November, 1939, Leinsdorf was named the head of the German wing of the Met at the age of 27. In 1941-42, he made his first recordings (for Columbia), all of them accompaniments to Met singers in arias and duets.

When Artur Rodziński left the Cleveland Orchestra at the end of the 1942-43 season, Leinsdorf won out over a number of other conductors (including George Szell) who were considered for the post, and was given a three-year contract. Almost immediately, however, he was drafted for service in the U.S. Army. While he only served slightly under a year before being honorably discharged, by the time of his return to Cleveland it was clear that Szell was being favored as his successor. Leinsdorf served out his contract through the end of the 1945-46 season, making a number of recordings with the Clevelanders for Columbia just before his departure, including the Schumann "Spring" Symphony, Rimsky-Korsakov's "Antar" Symphony and the Dvořák Sixth.

From 1947 to 1955, Leinsdorf was the conductor of the Rochester Philharmonic, whose previous directors had been Albert Coates, Eugene Goossens and José Iturbi. He was later to acerbically refer to the post as "the best disguised dead end in the world". With the Rochester, he made a series of recordings for Columbia's Entré label, including a Beethoven "Eroica" that was favorably compared with Toscanini's, as well as the première recording of Rachmaninov's *Symphonic Dances*.

It was during this period that Leinsdorf recorded three LPs for RCA's Bluebird Classics series with the Robin Hood Dell Orchestra of Philadelphia, the two works presented here, and the Grieg and Mendelssohn First Piano Concertos with Ania Dorfmann (reissued on Pristine PAKM 066). The ensemble heard in these recordings was essentially the Philadelphia Orchestra minus several of its first desk players who were appearing elsewhere (e.g. Casals' Prades Festival) during the summer. The Robin Hood Dell, an outdoor amphitheater, was the summer home of the Philadelphians from 1930 through 1975, and is still used today for non-Classical concerts. The orchestra's recording sessions were held in the Academy of Music, usually the morning after the works were performed at the Dell.

Leinsdorf's approach to the Brahms First is very much in the objectivist Toscanini tradition, although he eschews the Maestro's tympani emendations at the reprise of the brass chorale in bars 408 to 417 of the finale, something which Ormandy had included in his 1950 recording with this orchestra. On the other hand, his Franck Symphony has a Romantic elasticity appropriate to the score. While Leinsdorf would go on to re-record the Brahms, this was his only version of the Franck. Neither of the recordings presented here were ever reissued by RCA or its successors.

After leaving Rochester, Leinsdorf would return to conduct at the Met and achieve the appointment for which he is possibly best remembered today, thanks in part to numerous RCA recordings – the directorship of the Boston Symphony (1962-69). He died in Zürich on September 11th 1993 after two further decades of peripatetic guest conducting throughout the world.

Mark Obert-Thorn



leinsdorf
conducts brahms & franck

PRISTINE
AUDIO
PASC 706

brahms
symphony no. 1
franck
symphony in d minor

robin hood dell
orchestra of philadelphia

studio recordings · 1952

Obert-Thorn

PRISTINE
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PASC 706

BRAHMS SYMPHONY NO. 1 - FRANCK SYMPHONY IN D MINOR
LEINSDORF, ROBIN HOOD DELL ORCHESTRA OF PHILADELPHIA

leinsdorf

conducts brahms & franck

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BRAHMS SYMPHONY NO. 1 - FRANCK SYMPHONY IN D MINOR
LEINSDORF, ROBIN HOOD DELL ORCHESTRA OF PHILADELPHIA

PASC 706

PRISTINE
AUDIO

Producer and Audio Restoration
Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of Erich Leinsdorf

Total duration: 77:38

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

1. 1st Mvt. - Un poco sostenuto - Allegro - Meno allegro (12:23)
2. 2nd Mvt. - Andante sostenuto (8:28)
3. 3rd Mvt. - Un poco allegretto e grazioso (4:32)
4. 4th Mvt. - Adagio - Più andante - Allegro non troppo, ma con brio - Più allegro (15:17)

Recorded 16 July 1952 in the Academy of Music, Philadelphia - First issued on RCA Bluebird Classics LBC-1004

FRANCK Symphony in D minor

5. 1st Mvt. - Lento - Allegro ma non troppo (16:59)
6. 2nd Mvt. - Allegretto (9:56)
7. 3rd Mvt. - Allegro non troppo (10:03)

Recorded 18 July 1952 in the Academy of Music, Philadelphia - First issued on RCA Bluebird Classics LBC-1001

Robin Hood Dell Orchestra of Philadelphia
conducted by Erich Leinsdorf

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