

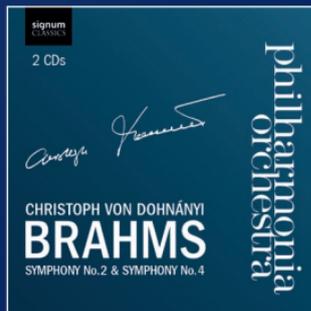
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A large, elegant white signature of Christoph von Dohnányi is written across the middle of the page.

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BRAHMS

SYMPHONY No.1 • SYMPHONY No.3

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

CD 1

Symphony No.1 in C minor, Op.68

- | | | |
|---|---|-------|
| ① | i. Un poco sostenuto – Allegro | 14.27 |
| ② | ii. Andante sostenuto | 8.32 |
| ③ | iii. Un poco allegretto e grazioso | 4.35 |
| ④ | iv. Adagio – Più andante – Allegro non troppo ma con brio | 17.24 |
| | Total timings | 45.00 |

CD 2

Symphony No.3 in F major, Op.90

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| ① | i. Allegro con brio | 12.51 |
| ② | ii. Andante | 8.36 |
| ③ | iii. Poco allegretto | 6.25 |
| ④ | iv. Allegro | 9.23 |
| | Total timings | 31.17 |

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA
CHRISTOPH VON DOHNÁNYI CONDUCTOR

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BRAHMS

SYMPHONY No.1
SYMPHONY No.3

Symphony No.1 in C minor, Op.68

Symphony No.3 in F major, Op.90

The rise of the symphony was initially an extraordinarily rapid continuum, with Haydn and his contemporaries fluently penning one after another in the second half of the Eighteenth Century, as these works for extended ensemble gradually shed their attachment to church, chamber, vocal or choral music. And, as the form of the symphony developed, concentrating the minds of composers and gradually becoming an important cultural event, so the works declined in number and grew in complexity and length. Compared to Haydn's mass of symphonies, even Mozart's 40-something efforts in the genre appear relatively few in number. With the dawning of the Nineteenth Century, composers, promoters, critics and the public alike continued to focus more closely on the symphony, attaching ever greater importance to it, and therefore the numbers dropped further into single figures, but with significantly greater size, depth, length and

technique. By the time we reach 1804, and the breadth and emotional impact of Beethoven's iconic 'Eroica' symphony, the form is barely recognisable from just 50 years previously.

Beethoven's olympian efforts cast a huge shadow over not only the succeeding generation of would-be symphonists, but have darkened the hopes of almost every composer since. Although the symphonic genre would prove to be resilient, Beethoven's nine essays were regarded by 1830 almost as the end point in the field. It was but a momentary blip in the symphony's inexorable Romantic mission, but composers were certainly suffering from a crisis of creativity, burdened by Beethoven's monumentalism. Wagner abandoned his own symphonic efforts in the early 1830s agreeing with many a commentator that Beethoven's Ninth had effectively delivered the final word on the symphony as a living, developing genre – a poor time, then, for a budding symphonist to be born just a few years after the death of Beethoven, in 1827. Johannes Brahms,

born six years later, became one of the great composers of his or any other day, but was not only completely over-awed by a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as a youth, but could later in life confide in the conductor Hermann Levi, 'I shall never write a symphony. You have no idea how the likes of us feel when we hear the tramp of a giant like HIM behind us'.

In 1853, Brahms first met Robert and Clara Schumann – an event which profoundly changed his life. Brahms and Clara retained a complex but harmonious relationship until their deaths in 1897 and 1896, respectively, whilst Robert, whom Brahms knew for only a few years, celebrated the 20-year-old in a famous article *Neue Bahnen* which appeared in his journal, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*:

And now he has arrived ... His name is Johannes Brahms, and he hails from Hamburg ... Sitting at the piano, he began to explore the most wonderful regions. We were drawn into more and more magical circles by his playing ... There were sonatas, or rather veiled symphonies; songs whose poetry could be understood without words; piano pieces both of a demonic nature and of the most graceful forms; sonatas for piano and violin; string

quartets, each so different from the other that they seemed to flow from various different sources. And then it seemed as if all those rushing streams combined as in a waterfall ... accompanied on the bank by the playfulness of butterflies and the voices of nightingales.

Schumann's musical acumen was so acute he predicts, in the same article, that when the orchestra lends itself to the young man, he will give us glimpses of a magical world. What even Schumann couldn't divine, was that it would take Brahms another 22 years to complete his First Symphony and continue the Haydn-Mozart-Beethoven-Mendelssohn-Schumann symphonic line. By 1876, Brahms was no longer the promising young gun, having matured into a highly respected master of his art. The symphony's opus number, 68, is ample evidence of his published compositional activity, and it is a matter of much conjecture as to the amount of completed or partial works which Brahms destroyed during these two decades (upper estimates of destroyed or partial string quartets, for example, number around 30).

As Schumann gradually descended into madness and eventual death, in 1857, Brahms was already ignoring his own negativity

towards the symphony and replacing it with Schumann's confidence that he was born to write for the orchestra. Significant sketches from these years did not produce a symphony but were instead co-opted into his mighty Piano Concerto No.1 in D minor, the first of his two serenades for orchestra and eventually into *Ein deutsches Requiem*. For much of the 1860s, Brahms avoided composing, or at least publishing, large-scale orchestral works, but never strayed far from symphonic thought. The chamber works of the decade show him honing thematic development, variation technique and instrumental colour in a series of masterpieces which are less the work of a journeyman composer and more the master composer at work. Glorious compositions from the period include two string sextets, the Piano Quintet, three piano quartets, the Horn Trio and two spectacular variation sets for piano, on themes by Handel and Paganini. In 1873, the publication and favourable reception of his first purely orchestral work in well over a decade, the *Variations on a Theme by Joseph Haydn*, provided the final push for Brahms to look Beethoven in the eye and finish his **Symphony No.1 in C minor, Op.68**.

The première, conducted by Felix Dessoff in Karlsruhe on 4 November 1876, was a

triumph, as indeed were most subsequent performances, leading the great conductor Hans von Bülow to dub it 'Beethoven's Tenth'. Although seemingly a well-meant quote, comparing the work as a worthy successor to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, it was double-edged for Brahms, especially when critics noted the similarity of parts of the *Finale* of the symphony to Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy'. 'Any ass can see that' was Brahms's famous rejoinder, without mentioning that the work has actually more in common with the great master's Fifth Symphony in its overall structure. The highly influential critic Eduard Hanslick largely raved about the piece, 'Even the layman will immediately recognize it as one of the most individual and magnificent works of the symphonic literature ... this new symphony of Brahms is a possession of which the nation may be proud, an inexhaustible fountain of sincere pleasure and fruitful study'. Hanslick has been proved correct through the ages: the work is pure Brahms – a vast, dramatic gesture, from the searing strings and portentous timpani of its opening to the herculean, thunderous and utterly triumphant finale.

After the decades of intimidation, hard graft and diligent study that eventually led to his turbulent First Symphony, the Second appeared

just over a year later, a surprisingly sunny work and unsurprisingly thought of as his equivalent to Beethoven's 'Pastoral' symphony. Six more masterpiece-filled years followed before Brahms settled to compose his **Symphony No.3 in F major, Op.90**. Now 50 years old and considered by many to be the greatest instrumental and orchestral composer of the age (Wagner and Verdi taking the operatic plaudits) he settled in the spa town of Wiesbaden in the summer of 1883 to complete the symphony. A private, occasionally difficult individual, Brahms was no great gatherer of honours, refusing to attend conferred doctorates and the like from even the most august institutions. Neither was he a family man, remaining a bachelor until the end of his days. But during his summer in Wiesbaden, he struck up a close relationship with the mezzo-soprano Hermine Spies for whom he wrote and arranged songs and accompanied in recitals. Brahms's friend and biographer (in eight volumes), Max Kalbeck maintained that Brahms worked his own personal motto theme, the notes F-A-F into the composition.

Such motto themes are not unusual in music. Some are musically explicit and easy to recognise, such as those of Bach or Shostakovich, essentially using musical notes

to represent their names, whilst others require a great deal of detective work, a particularly complex example being Alban Berg. Brahms had early experience of dealing with such romantic motifs immediately after meeting Robert Schumann in October 1853. Schumann had the idea of creating a sonata for the famous violinist Joseph Joachim. Joachim's personal motto theme were the notes F-A-E, meaning *Frei Aber Einsam* (free, but alone). Schumann, his pupil Albert Dietrich and the young Brahms all contributed to the work. The bachelor Brahms's own motto, F-A-F, translates to *Frei Aber Froh* (free, but happy). Kalbeck's idea that Brahms was indeed infatuated with Hermine Spies, but displayed an ambivalence about the relationship by often substituting the minor mode F-A flat-F instead of the happier F-A-F, is a matter for conjecture, but certainly adds spice to the work.

Unlike his First Symphony, there are not too many clues as to the genesis of the Third, so relatively rapid was its composition. It is the shortest of his four symphonies and the only one to end in a reflective and accommodating, rather than triumphant, manner. Its balance and poise brought Brahms his finest success at its première, conducted by Hans Richter, in Vienna on 2 December 1883. Despite

its romantic attachment to Hermine Spies, it was Clara Schumann to whom Brahms presented the symphony's manuscript as a gift on her 64th birthday. She in turn wrote the following delightful summation of the work:

I have spent many hours with your wonderful creation ... What a work! What a poem! What a harmonious mood pervades the whole! All the movements seem to be of one piece, one beat of the heart, each one a jewel! ... I could not tell you which movement I loved most. In the first I was

charmed straight away by the gleams of dawning day, as if the rays of the sun were shining through the trees. Everything springs to life, everything breathes good cheer, it is really exquisite! The second is a pure idyll; I can see the worshippers kneeling about the little forest shrine, I hear the babbling brook and the buzz of the insects. There is such a fluttering and a humming all around that one feels oneself snatched up into the joyous web of Nature.

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BIOGRAPHIES

CHRISTOPH VON DOHNÁNYI

Christoph von Dohnányi was Principal Conductor of The Philharmonia Orchestra from 1997 to 2008 and became Honorary Conductor for Life in September 2008. The partnership began in 1994 when he served as Principal Guest Conductor. For several years they were in residence at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. Their performances featured productions of Strauss's *Arabella*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and *Die schweigsame Frau*, Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*,

Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* and Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, as well as a critically acclaimed cycle of Brahms symphonies. Christoph von Dohnányi regularly led concerts at Southbank Centre and throughout the United Kingdom and Continental Europe. In his final season as Principal Conductor, Dohnányi and the orchestra were invited for three concerts in Vienna's prestigious Musikverein, they journeyed throughout Germany and made a coast-to-coast tour of the USA.

In December 1981 Christoph von Dohnányi first conducted The Cleveland Orchestra and was named Music Director Designate in 1982, serving as sixth Music Director from September 1984 to August 2002, becoming Music Director Laureate from then on. The orchestra and he frequently toured the US, Asia and Europe, performing concerts at the Salzburg Festival, BBC Proms and Edinburgh Festival, and they were in residence at Carnegie Hall, New York. In 1998 they performed in China for the first time in the orchestra's history. During Dohnányi's tenure Severance Hall, The Cleveland's Orchestra's home, was renovated and extended to bring back one of America's biggest organs into the musical life of Cleveland.

His recordings with Cleveland include the complete symphonies of Beethoven, Brahms and Schumann, works of Bruckner, Mahler, Dvorak and R. Strauss and Wagner's *Die Walküre* and *Das Rheingold*.

Dohnányi's discography with the Wiener Philharmoniker includes *Fidelio*, *Wozzeck*, *Lulu*, *Erwartung*, *Salome*, *Der fliegende Holländer* and symphonic works by Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky, the violin concertos of Glass and Schnittke with Gidon Kremer, Dvořák's Piano Concerto with

András Schiff and orchestral transcriptions of chamber music by Brahms and Mahler.

As a regular guest at the Salzburg Festival, Christoph von Dohnányi has led the Wiener Philharmoniker in several new productions including *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Salome*, *Così fan tutte*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Erwartung*, *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*, as well as the world premières of Henze's *Die Bassariden* and *Cerha's Baal*.

From September 2004 to July 2010 Dohnányi was Chief Conductor of the NDR Symphony Orchestra conducting subscription season concerts in Hamburg, Lübeck, Bremen and Kiel. They also toured Europe, South America, the US and Japan.

As a guest conductor in the US he regularly leads such orchestras as those of Boston, Chicago, Pittsburgh, New York, Philadelphia and Los Angeles. In Europe, he has been a guest conductor with all the major orchestras including, most recently, the Berliner Philharmoniker, Orchestre de Paris, Royal Concertgebouw and Israel Philharmonic orchestras and Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich.

Born in Berlin, Christoph von Dohnányi began to study law in Munich but soon chose to

join the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München to study composition, piano and conducting. Upon graduating, he was awarded the Richard Strauss Prize by the City of Munich and continued to study with his grandfather, Ernst von Dohnányi, at Florida State University.

In 1953 Sir Georg Solti hired Christoph von Dohnányi as répétiteur and conductor at Oper Frankfurt. At the age of 27 he became Germany's

youngest General Music Director in Lübeck followed by the Chief Conductor position at first in Kassel and then of the WDR Sinfonieorchester, Cologne. From 1968 he served as General Music Director in Frankfurt and, from 1972, as Director of the Oper Frankfurt. From 1977 to 1984 he was Intendant and Chief Conductor of the Hamburgische Staatsoper. In Frankfurt and Hamburg he successfully aimed to balance traditional opera productions and innovative music theatre.

philharmonia orchestra

The Philharmonia Orchestra is one of the world's great orchestras. Acknowledged as the UK's foremost musical pioneer, with an extraordinary recording legacy, the Philharmonia leads the field for its quality of playing, and for its innovative approach to audience development, residencies, music education and the use of new technologies in reaching a global audience. Together with its relationships with the world's most sought-after artists, most importantly its Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor Esa-Pekka Salonen, the Philharmonia Orchestra is at the heart of British musical life.

Today, the Philharmonia has the greatest claim of any orchestra to be the UK's National Orchestra. It is committed to presenting the same quality, live music-making in venues throughout the country as it brings to London and the great concert halls of the world. In 2010/11 the Orchestra is performing more than 150 concerts, as well as presenting chamber performances by the Soloists of the Philharmonia Orchestra, and recording scores for films, CDs and computer games. For 15 years now the Orchestra's work has been underpinned by its much admired UK and International Residency Programme, which began in 1995 with

the launch of its residencies at the Bedford Corn Exchange and London's Southbank Centre. During 2010/11 the Orchestra not only performs more than 40 concerts at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, but also celebrates its 14th year as Resident Orchestra of De Montfort Hall in Leicester and its 10th year as Orchestra in Partnership at The Anvil in Basingstoke. The Orchestra's extensive touring schedule this season also includes performances in more than 30 of the finest international concert halls in Europe, China and Japan, with conductors including Esa-Pekka Salonen, Christoph von Dohnányi, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Lorin Maazel.

During its first six decades, the Philharmonia Orchestra has collaborated with most of the great classical artists of the 20th century. Conductors associated with the Orchestra include Furtwängler, Richard Strauss, Toscanini, Cantelli, Karajan and Giulini. Otto Klemperer was the first of many outstanding Principal Conductors, and other great names have included Lorin Maazel (Associate Principal Conductor), Riccardo Muti (Principal Conductor and Music Director), Giuseppe Sinopoli (Music Director) and Sir Charles Mackerras (Principal Guest Conductor). As well as Esa-Pekka Salonen, current titled conductors are Christoph

von Dohnányi (Honorary Conductor for Life), Kurt Sanderling (Conductor Emeritus) and Vladimir Ashkenazy (Conductor Laureate).

The Philharmonia Orchestra continues to pride itself on its long-term collaborations with the finest musicians of our day, supporting new as well as established artists. This policy extends into the Orchestra itself, where many of the players have solo or chamber music careers alongside their work with the Orchestra. The Philharmonia's Martin Musical Scholarship Fund has for many years supported talented musicians at the start of their careers, including an Orchestral Award, which allows two young players every year to gain performing experience within the Orchestra. The Orchestra is also recognised for its innovative programming policy, at the heart of which is a commitment to performing and commissioning new works by leading composers, among them the among them both the outgoing Artistic Director of its Music of Today series, Julian Anderson, and his successor from 2011/12, Unsuk Chin Since 1945 the Philharmonia Orchestra has commissioned more than 100 new works from composers including Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Mark-Anthony Turnage and James MacMillan.

Throughout its history, the Philharmonia Orchestra has been committed to finding new

ways to bring its top quality live performances to audiences worldwide, and to using new technologies to achieve this. Many millions of people since 1945 have enjoyed their first experience of classical music through a Philharmonia recording, and in 2011 audiences can engage with the Orchestra through webcasts, podcasts, downloads, computer games and film scores as well as through its unique interactive music education website, The Sound Exchange (www.philharmonia.co.uk/thesoundexchange). More than 3,500 people a month download free monthly Philharmonia video podcasts, which include artist interviews and features on repertoire and projects; these films have also been watched by more than

750,000 people on YouTube. In May 2010 the Orchestra's digital 'virtual Philharmonia Orchestra' project, RE-RITE, won both the RPS Audience Development and Creative Communication Awards, and after appearances in London and Leicester tours to Lisbon and Dortmund in 2011.

Recording and broadcasting both continue to play a significant part in the Orchestra's activities, notably through its partnership with Signum Records, releasing new live recordings of Philharmonia performances with its key conductors. Since 2003 the Philharmonia has enjoyed a major partnership with Classic FM, as The Classic FM Orchestra on Tour, as well as continuing to broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

Brahms Symphony No.1 recorded at the Royal Festival Hall Hall, Southbank Centre, London, 14 May 2009

Producer - Misha Donat
Engineer - Jonathan Stokes, Classic Sound Ltd

Design - Richard Slaney (for the Philharmonia Orchestra) and Andrew Giles

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signum classics Orchestra

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

CD 1

Symphony No.1 in C minor, Op.68

1	i. Un poco sostenuto – Allegro	14.27
2	ii. Andante sostenuto	8.32
3	iii. Un poco allegretto e grazioso	4.35
4	iv. Adagio – Più andante – Allegro non troppo ma con brio	17.24
	Total timings	45.00

CD 2

Symphony No.3 in F major, Op.90

1	i. Allegro con brio	12.51
2	ii. Andante	8.36
3	iii. Poco allegretto	6.25
4	iv. Allegro	9.23
	Total timings	31.17

CHRISTOPH VON DOHNÁNYI conductor

Recorded live at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, London



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