

Bruno Walter (born Bruno Schlessinger, September 15, 1876 – February 17, 1962) was a German-born conductor, pianist, and composer. Born in Berlin, he left Germany in 1933 to escape the Third Reich, settling finally in the United States in 1939. He worked closely with Gustav Mahler, whose music he helped establish in the repertory, held major positions with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Salzburg Festival, Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Staatsoper Unter den Linden and Deutsche Oper Berlin, among others, made recordings of historical and artistic significance, and is widely considered one of the great conductors of the 20th century.

Born near Alexanderplatz in Berlin to a middle-class Jewish family, he began his musical education at the Stern Conservatory at the age of eight, making his first public appearance as a pianist when he was nine; he performed a concerto movement with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1889 and a full concerto with them in February, 1890. He studied composition at Stern with Robert Radeke de:Robert Radecke, and remained active as a composer until about 1910 (see list of compositions below). But it was seeing an 1889 concert by the Berlin Philharmonic led by Hans von Bülow, he wrote, that "decided my future. Now I knew what I was meant for. No musical activity but that of an orchestral conductor could any longer be considered by me. He made his conducting debut at the Cologne Opera with Albert Lortzing's *Der Waffenschmied* in 1894. Later that year he left for the Hamburg Opera to work as a chorus director. There he first met and worked with Gustav Mahler, whom he revered and with whose music he later became strongly identified

Conducting In 1896, he was appointed Kapellmeister of the Stadttheater (municipal opera) in Breslau, on the strength of a recommendation from Mahler to the theater's director, Theodor Löwe. However, Löwe required that before taking up this position the young conductor change his last name from Schlesinger, which literally means Silesian, "because of its frequent occurrence in the capital of Silesia". In a letter to his brother paraphrased by Erik Ryding and Rebecca Pechefsky, Walter said he had "suggested several names, which Mahler wrote down and gave to Löwe, who returned the contract with the name Bruno Walter. These biographers add that Walter wrote to his parents that he found that "having to change his name was 'terrible,'" ; they report that Mahler and his sisters "pressed" Walter to make the change of name, and add that, contrary to occasional unsubstantiated reports, it "is unknown" whether Löwe's stipulation had anything to do with a desire to conceal Walter's Jewish origins.

In 1897, Walter became Chief Conductor at the municipal opera in Pressburg. He found the town provincial and depressing, and in 1898 took the position of Chief Conductor of the Riga Opera, Latvia. While there, he converted to Christianity, probably Roman Catholicism. In 1899 Walter was appointed music director of the Temeswar, Austria-Hungary (now Timisoara, Romania) Opera. Walter then returned in 1900 to Berlin, where he assumed the post of Royal Prussian Conductor at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, succeeding Franz Schalk; his colleagues there included Richard Strauss and Karl Muck. While in Berlin he also conducted the premiere of *Der arme Heinrich* by Hans Pfitzner, who became a lifelong friend.

In 1901, Walter accepted Mahler's invitation to be his assistant at the Court Opera in Vienna. Walter led Verdi's *Aida* at his debut. In 1907 he was elected by the Vienna Philharmonic to conduct its Nicolai Concert. In 1910, he accepted Mahler's invitation to select and coach solo singers for the premiere of Mahler's Symphony No. 8. In the following years Walter's conducting reputation soared as he was invited to conduct across Europe – in Prague, in London where in 1910 he conducted *Tristan und Isolde* and Ethel Smyth's *The Wreckers* at Covent Garden, and in Rome. When Mahler died on May 18, 1911, Walter was at his deathbed. On June 6, he wrote to his sister that he was to conduct the premiere of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, he did so in Munich on November 20, 1911, in the first half of an all-Mahler concert (the second half contained Mahler's Symphony No. 2 (Mahler) On June 26, 1912 he led the Vienna Philharmonic in the world premiere of Mahler's Symphony No. 9.



HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS

Ludwig van Beethoven

Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op. 21
Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92



BRUNO WALTER
THE COLUMBIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The year 1800 marked a watershed in Beethoven's development. On April 2 in Vienna, he made his debut as a composer of symphonies during a concert he had arranged and financed himself. Beethoven began to work intensively on the symphony in 1799, completing the work the following year. The symphony, though enthusiastically received at its premiere, already carried portents of the composer's coming radicalism. At the time, some observers commented upon the work's prominent use of wind instruments, but few noted the first symphony's masterstroke; it opens with the "wrong" chord -- a dominant seventh of the subdominant key of F major, and not the expected tonic chord of C major. The English musicologist Sir Donald Francis Tovey dubbed this work "a comedy of manners." It is, in some sense, a skit on the deeply engrained style and vocabulary of Classicism itself, though the humor is unquestionably Beethoven's own. The opening movement begins with the celebrated discord mentioned above, which ushers in the slow introduction, questioning and insistent. It leads to the start of the exposition, again interrogatory in character. Fanfares add a martial flavor to the music, which is offset by the more lyrically inclined second subject group. The exposition is repeated, according to Classical convention, and the development that follows is terse and far more acerbic in manner, and does not allow the same contrast between songful and martial elements. Already extremely mature and "studied," this austere development is relieved only when the recapitulation arrives, now with great forcefulness. The imitative dialogues between wind and strings are predictably Classical in style, as is the jubilant coda. The Andante seems more subdued and relaxed, but the manner in which it preserves the latent drama associated with symphonic form is particularly subtle and entertaining. It begins with a fugal motif, derived from the rising tonic triad heard at the start of the first movement's exposition, and used so emphatically in its coda. An ingenious piece of orchestration occurs at the close of the Andante's exposition. Triplet figures in the violins and flute and off-beat accompanying chords are supported by regular drum taps, perhaps pointing forward to the start of the Concerto for violin and orchestra, Op. 61, and to the closing bars of the Concerto for piano and orchestra, No. 5, Op. 73, "Emperor." The third movement's marking raises the question of whether Beethoven could have intended this to be a stately Haydn minuet before he increased the tempo indication. The incisive rhythmic energy suggests something wholly new, and the movement already has the manner of Beethoven's later scherzi -- it is one in all but name. While a more static episode in D flat follows the main material, and the central trio section is more reserved, it is significant, surely, that several Beethoven manuscripts (including that of his Symphony No. 3 in E flat, "Eroica") contain similar third-movement tempo markings. Tovey likened the explosive start of the finale to the release of "a cat from a bag." The whole orchestra plays a unison fortissimo chord of G, the dominant, an effect that recalls the slow introduction of the first movement. The main motif is derived from nothing more complex than a rising scale on the tonic, but throughout the movement, Beethoven's use of scalar figures becomes increasingly obsessive, as the theme is heard in a variety of keys, and is often heard in inversion when various instruments are in dialogue. The development features a daring harmonic treatment of the scale theme, and Beethoven employs much dense counterpoint before the work ends in a positive and triumphant reassertion of C major.

Ludwig van Beethoven completed this work in 1812, but withheld the first performance until December 8, 1813, in Vienna. It is scored for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, and trumpets, plus timpani and string choir.

1812 was an eventful year for the very famous, seriously deafened Beethoven. July was especially noteworthy. At Teplitz he finally met Goethe (1749-1832), but was disappointed to find (he felt) an aging courtier who was no longer a firebrand or kindred democrat; worse yet, a musical dilettante. A week before that only meeting of German giants, Beethoven had written the letter to his mysterious "immortal beloved" that was discovered posthumously in a secret drawer. Then, toward the end of the year, he meddled unbidden in the affairs of his youngest brother, Johann, who was cohabiting contentedly with a housekeeper. Somehow, he found time to compose the last of his ten sonatas for violin and piano and to complete a new pair of symphonies -- the Seventh and Eighth -- both begun in 1809. He introduced the Seventh at a charity concert for wounded soldiers, and repeated it four nights later by popular demand.

Richard Wagner called Symphony No. 7 "the apotheosis of the dance," meaning of course to praise its Dionysian spirit. But this oxymoron stuck like feathers to hot tar, encouraging irrelevant and awkward choreography (by Isadore Duncan and Léonide Massine among others) and licensing the music appreciation racket to misinterpret Beethoven's intent as well as his content. Wholly abstract and utterly symphonic, the Seventh was his definitive break with stylistic conventions practiced by Mozart, Haydn, and a legion of lesser mortals who copied them. He stretched harmonic rules, and gave breadth to symphonic forms that Haydn and Mozart anticipated. If, in his orchestral music, Beethoven was the last Austro-German Classicist, he did point those who followed him to the path of Romanticism.

While the poco sostenuto introduction begins by observing time-honored rules of harmony, within 62 measures it modulates from A major to the alien keys of C and F major, then back again! The transition from solemn 4/4 meter to 6/8 for the balance of an evergreen vivace movement (in sonata form) further exemplifies Beethoven's conceptual stretch.

Coming from the 20-minute funeral march of his earlier Eroica Symphony, Beethoven created an allegretto "slow" movement. He established a funerary mood (without its being specifically elegiac) through the repetition of a 2/4 rhythmic motif in A minor, the most somber key of the tempered scale. A minor serves more than an expressive function, moreover; it readies us for the reappearance of F major in a tumultuous five-part Scherzo marked Presto. Two trios go slower (assai meno presto), in D major -- a long distance harmonically in 1812 from the work's A major tonic. The beginning of a third trio turns into a short coda capped by five fortissimo chords.

A major finally returns in the final movement. Here more than anywhere else in his orchestral music, Beethoven became a race-car driver. As in the "slow" movement, the rhythm is 2/4, but sonata-form replaces ABA. And there's a grand coda longer than the exposition, the development, or the reprise, which, furthermore, begins in B minor! But modulations bring it back to A major in time for a heart-pounding final lap with the accelerator pressed to the floor.

Ludwig Van Beethoven

Symphony No. 1 & No. 7 in A major, Op. 92

Bruno Walter Columbia Symphony Orchestra

Symphony No. 1 in C Major, Op. 21

1 Adagio Molto - Allegro Con Brio 7:00

2 Andante Cantabile Con Moto 6:35

3 Menuetto 3:45

4 Adagio - Allegro molto 6:00

Symphony Nr. 7, Op. 92

5 Poco Sostenuto - Vivace 13:01

6 Allegretto 10:00

7 Presto 8:17

8 Allegro Con Brio 6:43

Transferred from a 15ips tape

Recorded 1959 by Columbia Records at American Legion Hall, CA



For more info e-mail us:
admin@highdeftapetransfers.com
or visit our website:
www.highdeftapetransfers.com