

## MASTERING EQUIPMENT

Digital: Antelope Audio Eclipse 384

Weiss Saracon Sample Rate Conversion Software

Weiss POW-r Dithering Software

Analog: Studer 810 Reel to Reel with  
JRF Magnetics Custom Z Heads & Siltech wiring

Aria tape head pre-amp by ATR Services  
Retro Instruments 2A3 Dual-channel tube program equalizer  
Sontec MEP-250EX Parametric EQ

Cables: Purist Audio Design, Siltech, Speltz Anti-Cables

VPI Classic Turntable w/ Benz Wood Cartridge  
Emotive Audio Custom Phone pre-amp

Power Sources: We use a PS Audio P10 Power Plant  
and Power Plant 300

Power Cords: Purist Audio Design, Essential Sound Products,  
Speltz Anti-Cables

Vibration Control: Symposium Acoustics Rollerblocks,  
Ultra platforms, Svelte shelves

Sonic Studio CD.1 Professional CD Burner  
using Mitsui Gold Archival CD's and Archival Gold DVD's



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

WILLIAM STEINBERG and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra



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## Facts about this Recording

**Recorded by Command Classics 1962 on 35mm film**

**Engineer Mastering - George Piros Engineer**

**Recording Chief - Robert Fine**

**Producer - Enoch Light**

**Transferred from a Command 4-track tape**

Brahms began his First Symphony in the 1850s but not complete the score until 1876, when it was performed on November 4 in Karlsruhe, Germany. The score calls for two flutes, three trombones, tympani, and strings. A performance can last between 45-50 minutes. "You have no idea," Brahms lamented, "how it feels to hear behind you the tramp of a giant like Beethoven." Encouraged by Schumann to undertake a symphony ("If one only makes the beginning, then the end comes of itself," he cajoled), Brahms made some attempts in 1854, but he was unsatisfied with the symphonic potential of the sketches, and diverted them into the First Piano Concerto and the German Requiem. He began again a year later, perhaps influenced by a performance of Schumann's *Manfred*, and set down a first movement, but this music he kept to himself, and even his closest friends knew of no more than the existence of the manuscript. Seven years passed before he sent this movement to Clara, Schumann's widow, to seek her opinion. With only a few reservations, she was pleased with this C Minor sketch, and encouraged Brahms to hurry on and finish the rest so that it could be performed. Brahms, however, was not to be rushed. Eager inquiries from conductors in 1863, 1864, and 1866 went unanswered. It was not until 1870 that he hinted about any progress at all beyond the first movement. The success of the superb Haydn Variations for orchestra of 1873 seemed to convince Brahms that he could complete his initial symphony, and in the summer of 1874 he began two years of labor—revising, correcting, perfecting—before he signed and dated the score of the First Symphony in September 1876. He was at work right up to the premiere, making alterations after each rehearsal. The C Minor Symphony met with a good but not overwhelming reception. It was considered by some to be stern and ascetic, lacking in melody. One critic suggested posting signs in concert halls warning: "Exit in case of Brahms." But Brahms's vision was greater than that of his audiences, and some time was needed by listeners to absorb the manifold beauties of this work. It is a serious and important essay ("Composing a symphony is no laughing matter," according to Brahms), one that revitalized the symphonic sonata form of Beethoven and combined it with the full contrapuntal resources of Bach, a worthy successor to the traditions Brahms revered. It has become the most

performed of Brahms's symphonies and one of the most cherished pieces in the orchestral literature. The success and popularity of the First Symphony are richly deserved. It is a work of supreme technical accomplishment and profound emotion, of elaborate counterpoint and beautiful melody. Even to those who know its progress intimately, it reveals new marvels upon each hearing. The first movement begins with a slow introduction in 6/8 meter energized by the heart-beats of the timpani supporting the full orchestra. The violins announce in half steps the upward-bounding main theme (and falling thirds) in the faster tempo that launches a magnificent, seamless sonata form. The second movement in E Major starts with a placid, melancholy song led by the violins. After a mildly syncopated middle section, the bittersweet melody returns in a splendid scoring for oboe, horn, and solo violin. The brief third movement, with its prevailing woodwind colors and five-bar melody, is reminiscent of the pastoral serenity of the Brahms earlier Serenades, an opinion offered by conductor Hermann Levi. Brahms knew that a symphony beginning in C Minor and ending in C Major would suffer invidious comparisons to Beethoven's Fifth. The Brahms finale begins with an extended, slow introduction based on several, pregnant thematic ideas. The first theme, high in the violins, is a minor-mode transformation of what will become the main theme of the finale, but here broken off by an agitated pizzicato passage. A tense section of rushing scales is halted by a timpani roll leading to the call of the solo horn, a melody originally for Alphorn that Brahms collected while on vacation in Switzerland. The introduction concludes with a noble chorale intoned by trombones and bassoons, the former having been held in reserve throughout the entire Symphony just for this moment. The finale proper begins with a new tempo and one of the most famous themes in the repertory, a stirring hymn-like melody that resembles the finale of Beethoven's "Choral" Symphony. When a friend pointed out this affinity to Brahms he shot back, "Any fool can see that!" The movement progresses in sonata form, but without a development section. The work closes with a majestic coda in the brilliant key of C major featuring the trombone chorale of the introduction in its full splendor.



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**1-Un poco sostenuto – Allegro – Meno allegro (C minor) 13:55**

**2-Andante sostenuto (E major) 10:17**

**3-Un poco allegretto e grazioso (A-flat major) 4:38**

**4-Adagio – Più andante – Allegro non troppo, ma con brio (C minor/C major) 16:45**

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Please Note: In the interest of preserving the superb sound quality of these historic recordings, they have been preserved in their original, pristine state for maximum fidelity. Transferred from commercially released, analog reel-to-reel tapes (some of which are more than 50 years old), the recordings themselves can be subject to certain "artifacts" which are an inseparable part of the original analog recording process, such as tape "hiss" or other defects, and these may be audible on certain music tracks.

Because your CD or DVD-A was individually "burned" in order to realize superior sound quality to stamped, mass-produced versions, microscopic cosmetic blemishes may be visible. Please regard these tiny marks as evidence of the "human touch" in the care and individual attention that each and every HD TT disc receives during its very demanding manufacturing process.



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