

and was one of four conductors, including Toscanini, to conduct the newly formed Palestine Symphony Orchestra. Though in great demand from the 1930s onwards, Horenstein did not actively seek a permanent conductorship; he appeared to prefer to work on his own terms.

After the Second World War, Horenstein returned to Europe and lived in Lausanne, Switzerland. Highlights of his renewed European career came in 1950, when he introduced Berg's opera *Wozzeck* in Paris, and in 1959, when his performance of Mahler's Eighth Symphony for the BBC did much to stimulate a Mahler revival in Britain. After 1964, when he presented Busoni's *Doktor Faust* in New York, he gave many concerts in London with the London Symphony Orchestra and in Manchester with the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra. In his later years, he appeared frequently at London's Covent Garden.

From Furtwängler, Horenstein learned the importance in searching for the metaphysical rather than theoretical meaning of music, and that outlook coincided with his own interest in Eastern philosophy. As a conductor, Horenstein greatly admired Stokowski for his broad repertoire and the sense of occasion he brought to every performance. He was intolerant of routine performances, even from the greatest orchestras, and in rehearsal, he would run through large sections of a work to establish coherence and continuity before proceeding to finer details of interpretation. In the words of his assistant Lazar, "the exceptional unity and cohesion that characterized his performances arose from the way he controlled rhythm, harmony, dynamics and tempo so that each individual moment might achieve the most vivid characterization, but the overall line and cumulative effect would not be lost."

In the early days of the LP record, Horenstein was widely known for his recordings of the Viennese masters, particularly Mahler and Bruckner, and derived inspiration from the interpretations of his idols, Nikisch, Walter, and Furtwängler. Before he was 30, he had recorded Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* and Bruckner's Seventh Symphony. Shortly before his death, he said that "one of the greatest regrets in dying is that I shall never again be able to hear 'Das Lied von der Erde.'"t

# Brahms

## Symphony No. 1 In C Minor Op. 68

Jascha Horenstein / The London Symphony Orchestra



Brahms composed this work between 1855 and 1876. Otto Dessoff led a "tryout" first performance in Karlsruhe, Germany, on November 4, 1876. At Düsseldorf in 1854-1856 -- where he helped Clara Schumann with her seven children while terminally mad Robert, her husband, wasted away in an asylum -- the young Brahms undertook on two separate occasions to sketch a symphony. By the end of 1858, one set of sketches had been assimilated into the First Piano Concerto, that gargantuan "serious" piece with Baroque underpinnings, in the tradition of Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge* and "Hammerklavier" Sonata. Sketches for a C major Allegro movement, in sonata form and 6/8 time, were saved for subsequent expansion and development. When, in 1862, he showed the results to now-widowed Clara, she expressed admiration but also concern that it ended too abruptly. For the next 12 years, Brahms kept this music close at hand. Finally, in 1874, he willed himself to complete the First Symphony that friends and admirers (beginning with Schumann in 1853, shortly after their first meeting) had been urging him to compose.

He polished the Allegro of 1855-1862, now in C minor, then wrote a solemn introduction hinting at themes already 12-20 years old. These included a recurring motto of three ascending semitones, repeated in the slow movement. Having created a horse to pull the cart, Brahms addressed the middle movements: one slow (*Andante moderato*, in E major, then C sharp minor), the other quasi-scherzoid (*Un poco allegretto e grazioso*, pleasant and graceful, in A flat, F minor, and finally B major), respectively in triple and duple meters. Certain kinds of performance can make the central movements sound out-of-place, which is not meant, however, to impugn their intrinsic quality. Both exemplify a master of musical art in his time, who had reached a rarefied synthesis of conflicting creative forces. Their substance and style bespeak maturity no less than the monumental finale created to trump them. There an ominous preface in C minor leads to a C major Allegro non troppo ma con brio (not too quickly but spiritedly), which remains in 4/4 time until a climactic alla-breve acceleration into the coda.

Brahms' decade of residence in Vienna had smoothed as well as ripened him: the

middle movements could be called Schubertian, by way of Schumann. The finale, however, pays homage to the Germany's Baroque masters: Scheidt, Froberger, Buxtehude, Bach, and expatriated Handel. Simultaneously it honors the symphonic architectonics of Beethoven without regressing. Although he belonged to the generation that succeeded Chopin and Schumann, Brahms liberated music as much as they from the traditional Germanic tyrannies of bar-lines, four- and eight-bar phrasing, downbeat accents, and rhythmic squareness. While none of the music by his colleagues sounded richer (not even Bruckner's with augmented winds and brass), Brahms achieved his ends with astonishingly simple means -- the basic Beethoven orchestra, sans bass drum, cymbals, or piccolo -- plain to the point of abstemiousness on paper, but inimitably sonorous in performance.

A champion of modern music and an intellectual and philosophical conductor of a sort not much encountered any more, Jascha Horenstein moved to Vienna with his family at age six. He went on to study violin with Adolf Busch, Indian philosophy at the University of Vienna, and music at the Vienna School of Music. By 20 he had already decided to become a conductor and left Vienna for study in Berlin, where he conducted the Schubert Choir and became an assistant to Furtwängler. In 1924, he made his debut with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, conducting Mahler's then-little-known First Symphony. From 1925 to 1928, he conducted the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, and in 1929, as guest conductor, he led the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in the premiere of Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite*. As a young man he made the acquaintance of Schoenberg, Webern, Stravinsky, Rachmaninov, Richard Strauss, Busoni, and Janacek, and frequently programmed their music for the rest of his life.

On Furtwängler's recommendation, Horenstein was appointed director of the Düsseldorf Opera in 1929, and remained there until, as a Jew, he was forced to leave Nazi Germany. In the 1930s he lived in Paris and traveled extensively, conducting in Brussels, Vienna, and the USSR, visiting Scandinavia with the Ballets Russe, and touring Australia and New Zealand. He settled in the U.S. in 1942, became a U.S. citizen, conducted many of the leading orchestras of both North and South America

# Brahms

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**1 I Un Poco Sostenuto-allegro-meno Allegro 13:46**

**2 Andante Sostenuto 9:31**

**3 Un Poco Allegretto E Grazioso 4:27**

**4 Adagio-piu Andante-allegro Non Troppo,  
Ma Con Brio-piu Allegro 16:39**

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Producer: Charles Gerhardt

Engineer: Kenneth Wilkinson

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