



BRAHMS

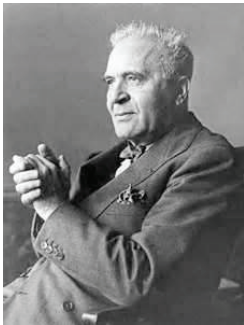
SYMPHONY NO. 3



BRUNO WALTER
COLUMBIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



Mastered in DSD256



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 Schlessinger, 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 helped Mahler 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.

Brahm's Third Symphony, first performed at one of the concerts of the Vienna Philharmonic Society, December 2, 1883, is undoubtedly the most popular of the series for the reason that it is clearer in its general construction than the others. At the same time, while less complicated and elaborate in its development, it is not lacking in ideas of a thoroughly poetical kind and in great variety of color.

The first movement opens with a short prelude of powerful chords by the wind instruments, introducing the first theme, a majestic melody, which is given out by the violins, accompanied by the violas and cellos, and supported by the trombones. The theme, which is peculiarly brilliant and even heroic in its style, is treated with masterly skill as it progresses from a steady and peaceful flow to highest point of vigor and majesty. In the transition to the second theme, however, announced by the clarinets, occurs a more restful period; and the theme itself, which is graceful and pastoral in style, imparts a serious, earnest character to the movement, which is still further enforced by the skillfully constructed Coda.

The second movement might almost be termed a rhapsody, as it is very short and is not elaborated after the customary manner. The greater part of the movement indeed rests upon and grows out of the opening theme, which is a simple but graceful and joyous melody, in strong contrast with the epic character of the work. This theme is taken alternately by the wind instruments, violas, and cellos, and is freely treated in variations, which give beautiful

tone-color to it. It has a brief rest while the clarinets and bassoons give out a resonant, stirring phrase as if foreshadowing what is to come. It is hardly pronounced enough, however, to be called a second theme. The first subject at once returns and goes on to the end in a series of delightfully contrasted effects.

The third movement, which takes the place of the ordinary Scherzo, is mostly serious in its style, and really fixes the general character of the symphony. Its principal theme, a genuine sample of the Lied, is given out by the cellos, at first fanciful, tender, and full of simple grace, then reminiscent and contemplative, and at last dreamy; to which succeeds a passage for the wind instruments, soothing and almost suppliant.

The Allegretto dies away in soft chords which lead to the Finale -- a passionate, agitated, and sombre movement, yet heroic, elevated, and strong in its style. The theme with which it opens rushes past with all the haste and mystery of a vision in a dream, and then reappears in a new harmonic form, only to grow more sorrowful and gloomy with the entrance of the trombones preludeing a new phrase, for now the sentiment changes and we have in its place a passionate conflict. Through the fierce and determined phrases of the violins, however, is heard the steady, jubilant song of the cellos. As they announce the victory the gloom disappears, and gives place to peace and rest once more, dignified and ennobled by the heroic theme of the first movement.

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1. Allegro con brio 10:00
 2. Andante 8:40
 3. Poco Allegretto 6:16
 4. Allegro 8:18
- Total Time 33:14

Transferred from a 15ips tape Recorded by Columbia Records 1960



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