

## PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

The orchestra was founded in 1945 by Walter Legge. As Legge was a recording producer for EMI it was widely believed that the orchestra was primarily formed for recording purposes, but that was not Legge's intention. He had been Sir Thomas Beecham's assistant at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, before World War II, and, assuming that he and Beecham would be in charge there again after the war, Legge planned to establish a first-class orchestra for opera, concerts and recordings.[1] After the war, opera resumed at Covent Garden under a different management, but Legge went ahead with his plans for a new orchestra. His contacts in the musical world during the war enabled him to secure the services of a large number of talented young musicians still serving in the armed forces in 1945. At the Philharmonia's first concert on 25 October 1945, more than sixty per cent of the players were still officially in the services. Beecham conducted the concert (for the fee of one cigar) but as he refused to be Legge's employee and Legge refused to cede control of the orchestra, Beecham instead went on to found the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

In its early years, with financial support of the Maharaja of Mysore the orchestra engaged many prominent conductors, including Arturo Toscanini, Richard Strauss and Wilhelm Furtwängler. Herbert von Karajan was closely associated with the Philharmonia in its early years, although he never held an official title with the orchestra. At first Legge was against appointing an official principal conductor, feeling that no one conductor should have more importance to the orchestra than Legge himself. But Karajan was principal conductor in all but name. He built the orchestra into one of the finest in the world and made numerous recordings, including all the Beethoven symphonies.

In 1954, following the death of Furtwängler, Karajan was elected music director of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and subsequently curtailed his work with the Philharmonia. Needing to find a new conductor for the orchestra, Legge turned to Otto Klemperer, whose career was flagging at the time. Klemperer's name became closely linked with the orchestra during an "Indian summer" of celebrated recordings. In 1959, he was named music director for life.

On 10 March 1964, Legge announced that he was going to disband the Philharmonia Orchestra. At a recording session with Klemperer, a meeting was convened where those present unanimously agreed that they would not allow the orchestra to be disbanded. Klemperer gave his immediate support, and on 17 March 1964 the members of the orchestra elected their own governing body and adopted the name New Philharmonia Orchestra. The inaugural concert of the New Philharmonia under its own auspices took place on 27 October 1964. It was a performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, conducted by Klemperer, who was now honorary president of the orchestra. From 1966 until 1972 the chairman of the orchestra was the principal flautist, Gareth Morris.

The orchestra gave many more live performances after it became self-governing than it had under Legge's management. It reacquired the rights to the name "Philharmonia Orchestra" in 1977, and has been known by that name since.

### Recent decades

Klemperer retired from conducting in 1971, but was officially still the orchestra's principal conductor until his death in 1973. For the two intervening years, Lorin Maazel held the post of associate principal conductor (1971-1973), and was effectively the principal conductor. Riccardo Muti was principal conductor from 1973 to 1982. Giuseppe Sinopoli succeeded Muti, acting as principal conductor from 1984 to 1994. In 1997, Christoph von Dohnányi became principal conductor, and served until 2008, at which time he took on the title of Honorary Conductor for Life of the orchestra.

In November 2006, the orchestra announced the appointment of Esa-Pekka Salonen as the orchestra's fifth Principal Conductor, effective with the 2008-2009 season. Salonen had made his first conducting appearance with the Philharmonia in 1983, his first guest-conducting engagement outside of Scandinavia. He has since conducted the orchestra in concerts and records over a period of more than twenty years, and served as principal guest conductor of the Philharmonia from 1985 to 1994. His initial contract as principal conductor was for 3 years. In November 2010, the Philharmonia announced the extension of Salonen's contract to 2014. In September 2013, the orchestra announced the further extension of Salonen's contract through the 2016-2017 season.



# BRUCKNER

## Symphony No. 4 "Romantic"

### Otto Klemperer / The Philharmonia Orchestra



Bruckner's Fourth Symphony was the one which began a reversal of the composer's fortunes for the better. The Vienna premiere under Hans Richter in 1880 was a resounding success. So elated was the composer that after a very promising rehearsal he pressed a coin into the conductor's hand with the enjoiner to have a beer. At the performance, Bruckner was called out for a bow after each movement.

The original version of 1874 was reworked into an almost totally new work, the most conspicuous changes being the replacement of the mysterious-sounding original scherzo with the now familiar "Hunting" one; a new finale subtitled "Volkfest" replaced the original, only to be replaced again with a less programmatic one two years later. Along with extensive reworking of the first two movements, these changes were all incorporated into the version most commonly known and performed today, being designated as the version of 1878-1880. A further 1887-1888 revision by Bruckner's pupils Lowe and Schalk has largely disappeared.

The subtitle "Romantic" was derived from a program Bruckner was persuaded by friends to append to the work, evoking images of medieval knights, castles, hunting, and other things. That Bruckner halfheartedly accepted the suggestion may be divined from his reply to a query regarding the finale: "I've quite forgotten what image I had in mind." And yet, the first movement's designation of "Dawn at a medieval citadel...knights sally forth from the gates on proud chargers...the

wonder of nature surrounds them..." is admittedly a bit appropriate. Against a mysterious tremolo a horn call emerges to be followed by the weighty and heroic main theme; a more idyllic "song period" follows, evocative of nature and replete with bird calls, followed in turn by a more imposing third subject; the movement's climax is a broad and blazing brass chorale which caps the development; the recapitulation ends with the horns powerfully repeating the symphony's opening notes against reiterated forte chords. The slow movement, a softly-treading andante in lieu of the usual Bruckner adagio, is said to represent a tryst of two medieval lovers; this alternates with a more spiritual chorale-like episode and works up to a climax for full orchestra which seems to invoke heroism more than romance. The following scherzo is perhaps the only undisputed tone-painting in the symphony, a rollicking, thundering depiction of a medieval hunt which is a tour-de-force for the horns; the trio is one of Bruckner's most engaging Ländlers, saturated with the serenity of the countryside. The finale of the 1880 version is expansive and episodic, commencing with a prolonged crescendo of an introduction and erupting into a theme derived from the opening of the symphony; a relaxed, winsome second theme alternates with passages of Wagnerian intensity and occasional fleeting references to the preceding movements; the long coda is a typically Brucknerian workup to a sonorous tapestry of sound with the work's opening motive woven into the fabric, bringing to a close what is often deemed the first of Bruckner's mature symphonies.

# BRUCKNER

## Symphony No. 4 "Romantic"

Otto Klemperer / The Philharmonia Orchestra

Symphony No. 4 In E Flat Major "Romantic" (1953 Edition) (1:00:59)

1 Bewegt, Nicht Zu Schnell 16:06

2 Andante Quasi Allegretto 13:55

3 Scherzo (Bewegt) & Trio

(Nicht Zu Schnell. Keinesfall Schleppend) 11:44

4 Finale (Bewegt, Doch Nicht Zu Schnell) 19:59

Recorded 1963 in Kingsway Hall, London by EMI



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admin@highdeftapetransfers.com  
or visit our website:  
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