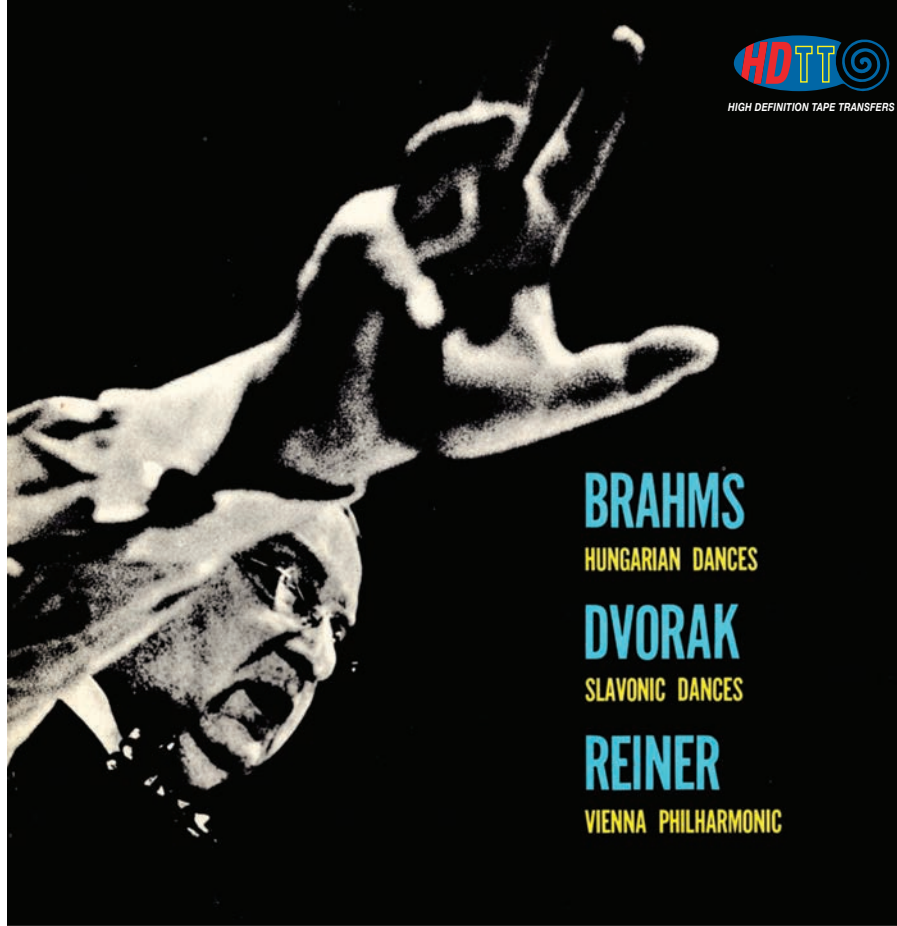


Fritz Reiner was one of the most acclaimed conductors of the 20th century -- noted for the vast range of his repertoire, which included both symphonic and operatic pieces spanning from the traditional canon to contemporary material, he was also an influential educator who counted among his pupils Leonard Bernstein. Reiner was born in Budapest, Hungary, on December 19, 1888; despite earning a law degree from the University of Bucharest, he pursued a career in music, and at age 21 was named chormaster of the Budapest Opera. A stint as conductor with the Budapest Volksoper followed before Reiner was chosen in 1914 to serve as principal conductor of the Royal Opera in Dresden, where he collaborated with Richard Strauss on productions of several of the composer's early operas.



In 1922 Reiner left Europe to relocate to America, settling in Cincinnati, OH, and signing on as conductor with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra; a decade later he was tapped to head the orchestral and opera departments at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music, where his students included Bernstein. After next serving as the music director of the Pittsburgh Symphony between 1938 and 1948, he served five years with the Metropolitan Opera. While Reiner's frequent migration might have been attributed largely to a restless creativity, he was also a notoriously difficult personality who frequently alienated those around him -- many of the musicians under his command openly loathed him, although he inevitably inspired the best work of their careers.

Reiner's own best work was undoubtedly his tenure with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which he elevated into one of the most celebrated ensembles in the world. Moving over to the CSO in 1953, he not only established the orchestra as a top-flight live attraction but also as a popular recording entity -- the countless albums they made for RCA's Living Stereo series during Reiner's decade-long tenure were much acclaimed by collectors for both the power of the performances and the unusually high fidelity of the recordings themselves. Releases like Fritz Reiner Conducts Richard Strauss and Fritz Reiner Conducts Bartók in particular remain definitive interpretations of the composers in question. Health problems forced Reiner to resign his position in 1962, and he died in New York City on November 15 of the following year.



BRAHMS
HUNGARIAN DANCES

DVORAK
SLAVONIC DANCES

REINER
VIENNA PHILHARMONIC

Hungarian Dances, "Hungarian Dance No. 5 in G Minor" set of 21 dances composed by Johannes Brahms. Originally intended for two pianists, the dances were published in that form in two sets in 1869 and in 1880. Some were orchestrated by Brahms himself, and others were orchestrated by his colleagues, including Antonín Dvořák.

Brahms, Johannes The Hungarian Dances capitalized upon two musical trends of the 19th century. One such trend was for dance-style pieces written for piano four-hands (a single piano, played by two pianists). The other was for compositions inspired by Europe's diverse blend of minority cultures, particularly the Roma (Gypsy) culture.

Both Roma-style music and piano four-hands music made early entrances into Brahms's life. He discovered the excitement of Hungarian folk music as a youth and began writing piano duets while still in his 20s. One important influence was the Hungarian violinist Eduard Reményi, whom Brahms had heard in concert at age 17. Three years later Brahms served as Reményi's accompanist at the piano. Brahms's familiarity both with piano four-hands music and with authentic Roma dances led him to try his hand at composing Hungarian-style pieces for which he knew there would be a ready-made audience.

Most of the dances are rapid, energetic pieces. Imitating the mercurial spirit of Hungarian folk music, some of the dances change tempo midway, as in the fourth dance, where a languid, melancholy introduction gives way to exuberance. The fifth dance begins with a quick tempo, then becomes even more frenzied.

The Slavonic Dances (Czech: *Slovanské tance*) are a series of 16 orchestral pieces composed by Antonín Dvořák in 1878 and 1886 and published in two sets as Opus 46 and Opus 72 respectively. Originally written for piano four hands, the Slavonic Dances were inspired by Johannes Brahms's own Hungarian Dances and

were orchestrated at the request of Dvořák's publisher soon after composition. The pieces, lively and full of national character, were well received at the time and today are among the composer's most memorable works, occasionally making appearances in popular culture.

The Op. 46 set is listed in the Burghauser catalogue as B.78 in the original piano four hand version, and as B.83 in the orchestral version. The Op. 72 set is catalogued as B.145 in the piano four hand version, and as B.147 in the orchestral version.

Prior to the publication of the Slavonic Dances, Op. 46, Dvořák was a relatively unknown composer and was of modest means. Consequently, he had applied for the Austrian State Prize fellowship (German "Stipendium") in order to fund his composing work. After he won the prize 3 times in 4 years (1874, 1876-77), Johannes Brahms, as one of the members of the committee responsible for awarding the stipend, referred Dvořák to his own publisher, Fritz Simrock. The first of Dvořák's music to be published by Simrock was the Moravian Duets, which attained widespread success; encouraged, Simrock asked the composer to write something with a dance-like character.

Unsure how to begin, Dvořák used Brahms's Hungarian Dances as a model—but only as a model; there are a number of important differences between the two works. For example, whereas Brahms made use of actual Hungarian folk melodies, Dvořák only made use of the characteristic rhythms of Slavic folk music: the melodies are entirely his own. Simrock was immediately impressed by the music Dvořák produced (originally for piano four hands), and asked the composer for an orchestral version as well. Both versions were published within the year, and quickly established Dvořák's international reputation. The enormous success of the Opus 46 dances led Simrock to request another set of Slavonic Dances in 1886; Dvořák's subsequent Opus 72 dances met with a similar reception.

Brahms Hungarian Dances

Dvořák Slavonic Dances

Fritz Reiner conducts the Vienna Philharmonic

Hungarian Dances

- 1 No. 5 In G Minor
- 2 No. 6 In D Major
- 3 No. 7 In A Major
- 4 No. 12 In D Minor
- 5 No. 13 In D Major
- 6 No. 19 In B Minor
- 7 No. 21 In E Minor
- 8 No. 1 In G Minor

Slavonic Dances

- 9 Opus 46, No. 1 In C Major
- 10 Opus 46, No. 3 In A Flat Major
- 11 Opus 46, No. 8 In G Minor
- 12 Opus 72, No. 2 In E Minor
- 13 Opus 72, No. 1 In B Major

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