



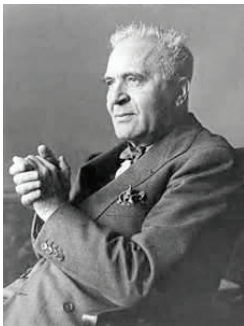
HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS

SCHUBERT

SYMPHONY NO. 9 "The Great"



BRUNO WALTER
COLUMBIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



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.

This work wasn't performed in its entirety until March 21, 1839, at Leipzig, with Mendelssohn conducting. After composing six complete symphonies between 1813 and 1818 in the manner of Haydn and Mozart, Schubert completed only one more in the remaining decade of his brief life. This was The Great C major, written during 1825-1826 (rather than 1828 as was supposed until quite recently), and thus is the allegedly lost "Gastein" Symphony. Although he dated a copy of the score "March 1828," it really is No. 9, despite an army of scholars that variously tagged it No. 7, 8, and even 10.

By 1818 the Viennese had typecast Schubert as a vocal composer, and the label stuck. His keyboard, chamber, and orchestral works were hardly known despite their excellences. Older brother Ferdinand hoarded the manuscript of No. 9, which Robert Schumann finally saw in 1838, and took to Leipzig. Orchestras in Vienna and Paris flatly refused to play it, however, and London musicians laughed derisively during rehearsals in 1844, when Mendelssohn tried without success to perform it there as he had in Leipzig ("with cuts" -- big ones). Strings in particular hated playing its endlessly repetitive patterns: their pre-Wagner and pre-Bruckner bow arms were not ready for Schubert's "heavenly lengths." When all repeats are observed, the Ninth lasts over an hour, with almost no let-up in momentum. Three of Schubert's four movements employ sonata form -- the first, the finale, and the song sections in an ABA scherzo. Only the slow movement is written in expanded

song form (ABABA).

A soft but accented horn theme in the slow introduction foreshadows others to come in the exposition; it returns triumphantly in a long coda. The main body of the movement, marked "not too fast," is rhythmically so powerful and relentless that an unmodified Allegro tempo would have risked destroying it (and us). Dotted rhythms characterize the A minor Andante, whose *con moto* qualification keeps it from dragging or sounding sentimentally sorrowful. Schubert's subsequent transition to A major is breathtaking, and his quiet writing for horns magical. As the movement began, it ends in A minor.

Beethoven-like, the Song parts of the Allegro vivace scherzo feature a miniature exposition-development-reprise (maybe Schubert knew the elder master's Ninth after all), full of dance melodies. C major yields to A major in the trio, with its broader tune for winds, before the song-sonata repeats.

Allegro vivace, again in C, this finale begins with a churning subject in triplet rhythm that stubbornly fights resolution (it is the grandest and most famous compositional trap in all music). Schubert finally must stop before he can introduce a new theme on clarinets and horns. Development and recapitulation follow on a titanic scale, capped by a coda in kind -- a movement, altogether, just short of 1,200 measures!

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- I. Andante; Allegro Ma Non Troppo 14:40
- II. Andante Con Moto 15:05
- III. Scherzo: Allegro Vivace 9:55
- IV. Finale: Allegro Vivace 12:25
- Total Time: 52:05

Transferred from a 15ips 2-track tape
Recorded by Columbia Records January 31; February 2, 4, 6, 1959
Venue: American Legion Hall, Hollywood, CA



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admin@highdeftapetransfers.com
or visit our website:
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