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SUPER AUDIO CD

BRAHMS *Concerto No. 1*
ARTUR RUBINSTEIN
FRITZ REINER *Conductor*

Chicago Symphony Orchestra



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JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 15

- 1 Maestoso 21:37
- 2 Adagio 13:17
- 3 Rondo: Allegro non troppo 11:22

(Recorded April 17, 1954)



Arthur Rubinstein, piano
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Fritz Reiner, conductor
(Recorded Orchestra Hall, Chicago)

Produced by Richard Mohr & John Pfeiffer
Recording Engineers: Lewis Layton & Leslie Chase
Mastering Engineer: Mark Donahue
DSD Engineer: Dirk Sobotka
Remastering Supervisor: John Newton
Reissue Producer: Daniel Guss
Series Coordination: Tim Schumacher

Editorial Supervision: Elizabeth A. Wright
Design: Red Herring Design
Photography: Sara Foldenauer

This was an original two-track stereo recording; in SACD multi-channel mode, the music will be heard only from the front left and right channels.

For more information about Living Stereo and other Living Stereo SACDs, please visit www.livingstereo-sacd.com

NOTES BY WALLACE BROCKWAY *AUTHOR*
WITH HERBERT WEINSTOCK OF MEN OF MUSIC AND THE OPERAS

Brahms wrote two piano concertos utterly dissimilar in structure, mood and musical climate. Composed a quarter of a century apart, they have this in common—they demand the grand manner in interpretation. And, although No. 2 is an excessively difficult work (particularly for the soloist), No. 1 is still, after a lapse of almost a hundred years, the more controversial work.

Origin—or origins—first. It is fairly clear that the concerto was conceived as a symphony in the summer of 1854, and of this aborted project Brahms wrote to Schumann, who had first recognized his genius, the following year. As 1855 was drawing to a close Brahms wrote to Clara Schumann (increasingly his correspondent since Schumann's retreat to a sanatorium for the mentally disturbed) a letter of salient interest in the still largely unwritten history of the role of the unconscious in artistic creation. He had dreamt that he

had turned his symphony into a concerto with a scherzo of immense difficulty. It was this dream scherzo that became the rondo of the completed concerto. So far, so good. Unfortunately, in 1862 Albert Dietrich, whose sole moment of glory consisted of having written (1853) the first movement of a sonata for violin and piano (scherzo by Brahms, finale by Schumann), remembered that he had seen parts of the *Concerto in D Minor* in a sonata for two pianos. This sonata has never been found, but the whole story is revealing in the light that it casts on the logic of musical form.

The *Concerto in D Minor* has no program, but this has not saved it from the guesses of the cobweb spinners. The most fantastic of these exemplify the old adage that a person cannot be too careful about what he says and, more particularly, to whom he says it. The great Hungarian violinist and conductor, Joseph Joachim, a man of vast probity,

made certain innocent remarks to Max Kalbeck, author of the standard life of Brahms (if an eight volume life is not standard, what is it?). These were misshaped thus: The almost morbidly gloomy first movement of the D minor Concerto was construed to picture Brahms' reaction to Schumann's attempted suicide in 1854—or perhaps, to cite another romanticizer, it traced the suicide attempt itself. The holograph of the second movement bore the sentence: *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini* (Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Master). Kalbeck's egregious suggestion was that the blessed one was Brahms himself, who took this opportunity of proclaiming himself heir to Schumann's kingdom, though it must have been obvious—even at this early stage in Brahms' career—that his kingdom and Schumann's had not too much in common. (It is interesting that the composer later struck out these enigmatic words in Joachim's copy of

the score.) Kalbeck's fantasies were demolished a quarter of a century ago, but they retain a certain unhealthy life. The third movement has been spared the vagaries of interpretation, but it has suffered (as we shall see) for another reason.

The *Concerto in D Minor* was first performed at Hanover on January 22, 1859, with Joachim on the podium, and Brahms at the piano. The audience listened respectfully but manifestly without enthusiasm. A detained observer would have said that these conscientious German *Musikkenner* were thinking it over rather too carefully for the composer's peace of mind. At any rate, there was nothing that seemed to foreshadow its reception, five days later, when he played it at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, with Julius Rietz conducting. The Leipzigers' brutality to the *Concerto in D Minor* has been compared to the Parisians' treatment of *Tannhäuser* two

years later, and not unfairly. Brahms thus described the fiasco to Joachim: "The first and second movements were listened to without the slightest display of feeling. At the end, three pairs of hands were brought together very slowly, upon which a perfectly distinct hissing from all sides forbade any such demonstration ... This failure has not impressed me at all. After all, I am only experimenting and feeling my way. But the hissing was too much."

Conservative opinion was summed up in the phrase: "A desert of screaming dissonances and ugly discords." We rub our ears, and realize that the rhetoric of critical dissent has not much changed from century to century. Brahms' stoicism, his defiance even (a heritage from his beloved Beethoven), constituted a much needed armor at this time. He had elected, courageously, tactlessly to introduce himself to Leipzig, the stronghold of Mendelssohnian conservatism, with a

novel work that lasted forty seven minutes. It must have been that mirthful rondo, coming after the gloomy *maestoso* and the meditative, serenely solemn *adagio*, that outraged the pious, tidy souls of the Leipzigers. The D Minor did not catch the affection of any audience until 1865, when Brahms played it at Mannheim under Hermann Levi. In the nineties, Leipzig finally surrendered, when Eugen d'Albert—a Gewandhaus favorite—played it, with the composer conducting. As a final addendum to these performance data is the fact—or legend—that Brahms abandoned a promising subcareer as a concert pianist after his native Hamburg had received him and the D Minor coldly at one of its early hearings.

It has been said that the D Minor has come tardily into its own, although for many years it was one of Brahms' few works available in published form. Certainly it is now well-established in the concert repertoire. Yet, even today it is dis-

cussed with the urgency that goes with special pleading, as if the reactions of 1859 have still to be quelled. And this despite the fact that no composition of Brahms speaks more clearly in musical terms.

Sir Donald Francis Tovey, greatest of British music critics, has this to say of the first movement of the *Concerto in D Minor*: "The first theme of the opening tutti is one of the mightiest utterances since Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*." Brahms would have appreciated these words.

The great Polish pianist, Arthur Schnitke, whose repertoire is particularly strong in the romantic composers, has expressed a special love for Brahms. He was fortunate in having Joachim, Brahms' closest friend, as his tutor at the Berlin Hochschule, of which Joachim was the first director. And, at his first appearance on the concert platform, he played the *Concerto in D Minor*. This concerto comes to us after Schnitke has studied and played it for more than half a century.

Fritz Reiner, born in Budapest, has a natural affinity for the music of Brahms, who—partly because of his association with Joachim—was fascinated by Hungarian melodies.

On October 6, 1953, RCA Victor made its first experimental "binaural" recordings. At New York's Manhattan Center, Leopold Stokowski conducted a pick-up orchestra in Enesco's *Roumanian Rhapsody No. 1* and Tchaikovsky's *Waltz from Eugene Onegin*. In December RCA continued stereo tests in Manhattan Center with Pierre Monteux and members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Then, in February 1954, RCA took equipment to Boston's Symphony Hall, where Charles Munch and the Boston Symphony were recording Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust*. For the first time, RCA engineers captured the performance on both mono and two-track tape. These experiments, combined with further technological refinements employed in Chicago's Orchestra Hall in March 1954, were the first forays into the world of stereo.

At the time that RCA initiated multi-track sessions, disc mastering and consumer playback technology were monaural. RCA Victor proceeded to use two- and three-track equipment to record the world's greatest artists—Heifetz, Piatigorsky, Reiner, Munch, Rubinstein, Fiedler—in anticipation that home technology would catch up to stereo sound. Finally, in 1955, 1/4" 7 1/2ips stereophonic tape players arrived on the consumer market, and RCA released its first Stereo Orthophonic tapes.

Stereo Orthophonic tapes redefined high fidelity. In 1958, the Western Electric Company produced the breakthrough Westrex stereo disc cutter, thereby revolutionizing master disc production. Stereo playback equipment was developed to coincide with the new disc-cutting technology. The same year, Living Stereo LP records were

launched, ushering in the golden age of stereo high fidelity.

RCA Victor's first two-track sessions in late 1953 and early 1954 were captured on proprietary RCA RT-21 1/4" 30ips tape machines, wired to a pair of mono mixers, each dedicated to one tape track. Neumann U-47 cardioid and M-49/50 omnidirectional microphones were favored, as were RCA-designed LC-1A 15" duo-cone speakers in the control room. Three-track recordings were realized on tube-amplifier Ampex 300-3 1/2" machines running at 15ips and in later years at 30ips, and were mixed down to 1/4" two-track masters. No equalization was used in the original tracking process; the microphone signals were summed through passive electronics and printed straight to tape. In addition, no equalization was used to alter playback takes for artist approval.

TECHNICAL NOTES

JOHN NEWTON, *SOUNDMIRROR INC.*

Since the earliest days of recording, engineers have strived to make recorded sound as immediate and thrilling as natural sound. The earliest electrical recordings were made with a single microphone positioned in the hall for optimum balance. The signal was fed to a cutting lathe, and with the advent of magnetic recording, to a monaural tape recorder; a copy of that tape was used to produce the LPs which consumers listened to at home.

With stereo, two microphones were placed in the hall. Signals were fed to a stereo tape recorder and consumers, listening back on two speakers, heard a new "depth" of sound. By placing microphones in the left, center, and right of the hall, engineers progressed to 3-channel recordings, which afforded them greater control over the musical balances that ended up in the stereo mix. Even as CDs replaced LPs, this same process was often followed.

Today, with the advent of SACD and multi-channel playback, the listener can hear the left, center, and right channels exactly as the engineers heard them at the original recording sessions. In this series of Living Stereo reissues on hybrid SACDs, we have used the 3-channel original tapes whenever they existed; when the material was recorded only in stereo, we used that tape. Some of the SACDs will therefore contain 2-channel, or a combination of 2- and 3-channel material. We used only two or three of the available six channels on the SACD disc because that was the vision of the original producers.

In remastering these tapes, we kept the signal path as short as possible. A Studer-Aria analog tape recorder was connected with premium Siltech cabling directly to specifically chosen dCS converters. This DSD data is directly encoded on the SACD. Thus the listener is able to hear the output of these converters exactly

as we heard it in the studio. The DSD program is essentially identical to the analog tape. What you hear are faithful copies of each historic recording—the pure performance, presented in its original splendor. No signal processing was necessary to "improve" these extraordinary tapes.

Throughout this very exciting project, history came alive as we heard the voices of legendary engineers verbally slating the tapes with the location and date of each session. We were greatly impressed not only with how little the original tapes were edited, but how skillfully engineers edited with their high-tech tool of the day, namely, a razor blade! Applying the best in 21st-century remastering technology, we believe we have done justice to the best in 20th-century recording technology for a new generation of listeners.



TECHNISCHE ANMERKUNGEN

JOHN NEWTON, SOUNDMIRROR INC.

Seit Beginn der Aufnahmetechnologie streben Tontechniker danach, den Klang der Aufnahme so unmittelbar und ergreifend zu erzeugen, wie der natürliche Klang selbst. Die frühesten elektronischen Aufnahmen wurden mit einem einzigen Mikrophon durchgeführt, das in der Mitte des Aufnahmesaals positioniert war, um eine optimal ausgewogene Balance zu erzeugen. Das Signal wurde zu einer Schnittmaschine, und nach der Einführung von magnetischen Aufnahmen zu einer Bandmaschine geleitet. Eine Kopie dieses Bandes wurde dann für die Produktion der LPs verwendet, welche die Käufer zuhause abspielten.

Seit dem Stereozeitalter wurden zwei Mikrophone im Aufnahmesaal platziert. Die Signale wurden zu einer Stereobandmaschine geleitet, und die Konsumenten, die die LP auf zwei Lautsprechern abspielten, bekamen einen neuen Eindruck der „Tiefe“ des Klanges. Durch eine Anordnung der Mikrophone links, mittig und rechts

im Aufnahmesaal, gelangten die Tontechniker zu 3-Kanal Aufnahmen. Diese erlaubten ihnen eine größere Kontrolle über die musikalische Balance, was im Stereo Mix aufging. Noch als CDs die LPs ersetzten, wurde dieses Verfahren oft verwendet.

Heute, seit der Einführung der SACD und Multi-Kanal Wiedergabe, kann der Konsument den linken, mittleren und rechten Kanal exakt so wahrnehmen und hören, wie der Tontechniker sie während der ursprünglichen Aufnahmesitzung gehört hat. Für diese Serie von Living Stereo Wiederveröffentlichungen auf hybrid SACDs haben wir die originalen 3-Kanal Bänder verwendet, wann immer diese existent waren. Sofern nur in Stereo aufgenommen wurde, haben wir diese Bänder verwendet. Deshalb enthalten einige dieser SACDs nur 2-Kanal oder eine Kombination aus 2-Kanal und 3-Kanal Aufnahmen. Wir haben darum auch nur zwei oder drei der sechs auf einer

SACD verfügbaren Kanäle benutzt, da dies die Vision der ursprünglichen Produzenten war.

Während des Remastering Prozesses dieser Bänder haben wir den Weg des Signals so kurz wie möglich gehalten. Eine analoge Studer-Aria Bandmaschine wurde durch hochwertige Siltech Kabel direkt mit speziell ausgewählten dCS Konvertern verbunden. Dieses DSD Datenmaterial wurde direkt auf die SACD kodiert. Dadurch ist der Konsument in der Lage, das Ergebnis dieser Konverter exakt so zu hören, wie wir es im Studio gehört haben. Das DSD Programm ist im Wesentlichen identisch mit den analogen Originalbändern. Was Sie hören sind genaue Kopien von jeder der historischen Aufnahmen—die pure Aufführung, präsentiert in ihrem ursprünglichen Glanz. Keine Aufbereitung der Signale war erforderlich, um diese herausragenden Bänder zu „verbessern“.

Im Verlauf dieses außerordentlich reizvollen Projekts wurde Geschichte lebendig, während wir die Stimmen legendärer Tontechniker gehört haben, wie sie den Ort und das Datum der jeweiligen Aufnahmesitzung auf die Bänder gesprochen haben. Wir waren höchst beeindruckt, nicht nur darüber wie wenig die Originalbänder bearbeitet worden waren, sondern auch wie gekonnt die Tontechniker mit dem High-Tech Gerät ihrer Tage gearbeitet haben: einer Rasierklinge! Für eine neue Generation von Hörern glauben wir der Aufnahmetechnologie des 20. Jahrhunderts gerecht geworden zu sein, unter Verwendung der besten Remastering Technologie des 21. Jahrhunderts.

NOTE TECHNIQUE

JOHN NEWTON, SOUNDMIRROR INC.

Depuis les tout débuts de l'enregistrement discographique, les ingénieurs rivalisent d'efforts pour que le son enregistré soit aussi immédiat et électrisant que le son naturel. Les premiers enregistrements électriques étaient réalisés avec un seul micro placé dans la salle pour une balance optimale. Le signal était transmis à un graveur, et, avec l'avènement de l'enregistrement magnétique, à un magnétophone monophonique ; une copie de cette bande magnétique était utilisée pour produire les microsillons que le consommateur écoutait chez lui.

Pour la stéréophonie, on a installé deux microphones dans la salle. Les signaux étaient transmis à un magnétophone stéréophonique, ce qui conférait un nouveau « relief » sonore à l'enregistrement écouté par le consommateur sur ses deux haut-parleurs. En positionnant des micros à gauche, au milieu et à

droite de la salle, les ingénieurs ont évolué vers un enregistrement à trois canaux leur assurant un meilleur contrôle de l'équilibre musical du mixage stéréophonique final. Ce procédé a souvent continué à être utilisé alors même que le CD remplaçait progressivement le disque noir.

Aujourd'hui, avec l'avènement du SACD et de la restitution multicanaux, l'auditeur entend les canaux gauche, central et droite exactement comme les entendaient les ingénieurs lors des séances d'enregistrement originales. Dans cette collection de rééditions « Living Stereo » sur SACD hybrides, nous avons utilisé les bandes originales à trois canaux chaque fois qu'elles existaient ; lorsque le matériau n'était enregistré qu'en stéréophonie, c'est cette bande que nous avons utilisée. Certains de ces SACD contiennent donc des enregistrements à deux canaux, ou une combinaison de matériau à deux et

trois canaux. Nous n'avons utilisé que deux ou trois des six canaux disponibles sur les SACD, car telle était la conception des producteurs de l'époque.

Lors du rematriçage des ces enregistrements, nous avons veillé à ce que le parcours du signal soit aussi court que possible. Nous avons directement connecté un magnétophone analogique Studer-Aria à des convertisseurs dCS spécifiquement choisis, au moyen de câbles Siltech haut de gamme. Ce matériau DSD est encodé directement sur le SACD. L'auditeur peut ainsi entendre la sortie de ces convertisseurs exactement telle que nous l'avons entendue en studio. Le flux DSD est essentiellement identique à la bande analogique. Ce que vous entendez est une copie fidèle de chacun des enregistrements historiques : l'interprétation à l'état pur, présentée dans sa splendeur originelle. Aucun traitement du signal

n'a été nécessaire pour « améliorer » ces bandes extraordinaires.

Tout au long de ce projet enthousiasmant, l'histoire est redevenue vivante pour nous grâce à la voix de ces ingénieurs de légende repérant verbalement les bandes en indiquant le lieu et la date de chaque séance d'enregistrement. Nous avons été très impressionnés non seulement par le petit nombre d'interventions sur les bandes originales, mais aussi par le talent avec lequel ces ingénieurs réalisaient le montage nécessaire à l'aide de l'outil de pointe de l'époque : la lame de rasoir ! Utilisant le meilleur de la technologie de mixage numérique du ^{xxi}e siècle, nous pensons avoir rendu justice au meilleur de la technologie d'enregistrement du ^{xx}e siècle pour une nouvelle génération d'auditeurs.