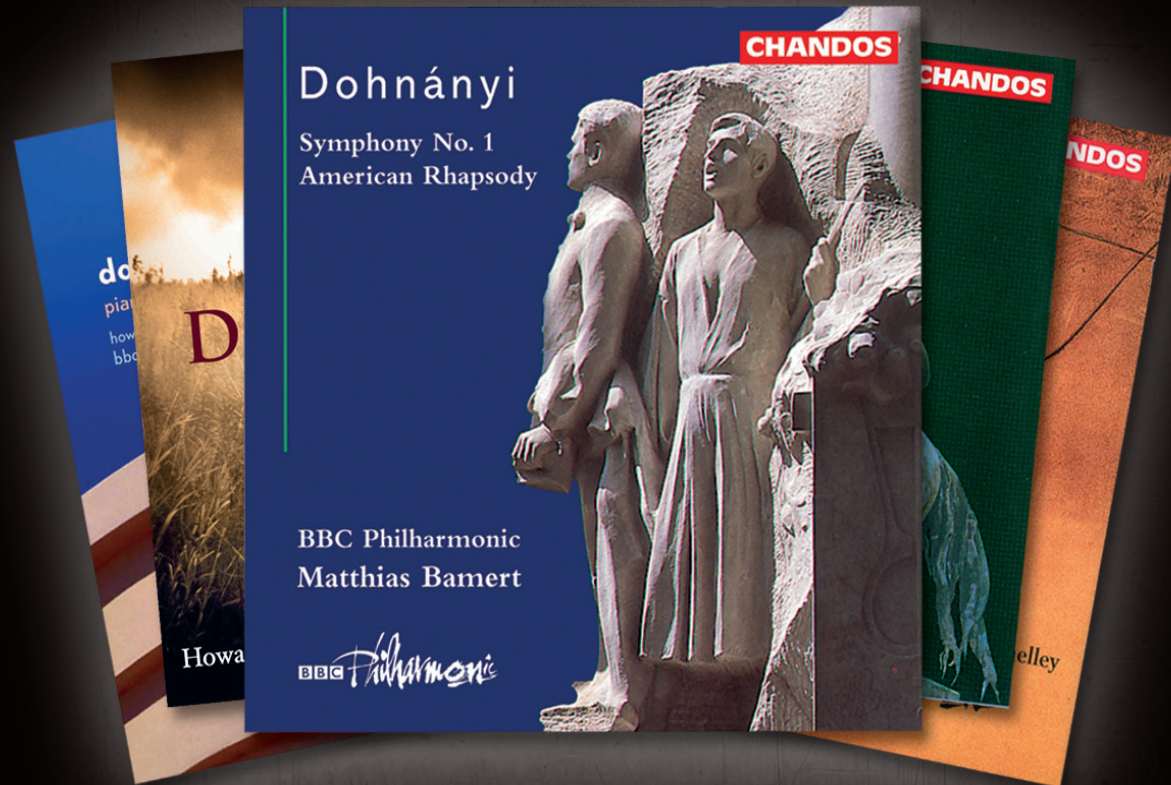


classic **CHANDOS**

DOHNÁNYI

ORCHESTRAL WORKS



James Ehnes violin

Howard Shelley piano • **Clifford Lantaff** harp

BBC *Philharmonic*

Matthias Bamert



Ernst von Dohnányi, c. 1925

Ernst von Dohnányi (1877–1960)

Orchestral Works

COMPACT DISC ONE

Ruralia hungarica, Op. 32b (1924)

24:56

Five Pieces for Orchestra

To My Dear Mother

- | | | | |
|--------------|---|--|------|
| <div>1</div> | 1 | Andante poco moto, rubato – Rubato – Tempo I | 8:49 |
| <div>2</div> | 2 | Presto, ma non tanto | 3:47 |
| <div>3</div> | 3 | Allegro grazioso | 2:09 |
| <div>4</div> | 4 | Adagio non troppo – Agitato, ma soltanto un poco più mosso –
Tempo I – Più adagio | 7:48 |
| <div>5</div> | 5 | Molto vivace – Vivo | 2:07 |

Concerto No. 1, Op. 5 (1897 – 98)*

43:27

in E minor • in e-Moll • en mi mineur

for Piano and Orchestra

Eugen d'Albert in Verehrung zugeeignet

- | | | | |
|--|-----|---|-----------------|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 2px;">6</div> | I | Adagio maestoso – Cadenza – [] – Cadenza – Poco meno adagio –
Allegro – Poco più mosso – Poco più mosso – Poco meno mosso –
Poco meno mosso – Poco più mosso – Molto adagio –
Poco meno adagio | 17:48 |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 2px;">7</div> | II | Andante | 8:42 |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 2px;">8</div> | III | Vivace – Poco più animato – Poco meno mosso –
Tempo I – Tranquillo – Tempo I – (Breit) – Maestoso –
Cadenza. Vivace – Maestoso – Cadenza. Vivace – Tempo I –
Cadenza – Tempo I – Meno mosso – Molto tranquillo –
Cadenza – Vivace – Maestoso – Presto – Poco più presto –
Più presto | 16:46 |
| | | | TT 68:38 |

COMPACT DISC TWO

	Symphony No. 1, Op. 9 (1900 – 01)	53:32
	in D minor • in d-Moll • en ré mineur for Large Orchestra	
1	I Allegro ma non troppo – Poco meno allegro – Tempo I	15:29
2	II Molto adagio – Più adagio – Un poco animato – Rubato – Poco più adagio	12:54
	Gillian Callow cor anglais • John Bradbury clarinet	
3	III Scherzo. Presto – Tranquillo – [] – Tranquillo – Poco più presto	5:20
4	IV Intermezzo. Andante un poco moto	3:34
	Janet Fisher viola	
5	V Finale. Introduzione. Molto sostenuto – Poco meno adagio – Tempo I – Maestoso – Tema con Variazioni. Allegro non troppo – Tranquillo – Più allegro – Tranquillo – Fuga. Allegro energico – Più allegro – A tempo I	15:55
6	American Rhapsody, Op. 47 (1953)	13:31
	Allegro	
		TT 67:18

COMPACT DISC THREE

Suite, Op. 19 (1908 – 09)

28:39

in F sharp minor • in fis-Moll • en fa dièse mineur

- | | | | |
|---|-----|--|-------|
| 1 | I | Andante con variazioni. Andante con moto –
Variazione I. Più animato –
Variazione II. Animato (Molto più allegro) –
Variazione III. Andante tranquillo –
Variazione IV. Allegro –
Variazione V. Vivace –
Variazione VI. Adagio – Poco a poco più andante | 11:00 |
| 2 | II | Scherzo. Allegretto vivace | 4:22 |
| 3 | III | Romanza. Andante poco moto – Poco più mosso –
Tempo I – L'istesso tempo | 5:50 |
| 4 | IV | Rondo. Allegro vivace – [] – Tempo I – Andante –
Tempo I | 7:14 |

Variations on a Nursery Theme, Op. 25 (1914)*

24:31

(Variationen über ein Kinderlied)

for Piano and Orchestra

5	Introduzione. Maestoso – Un pochettino più mosso – Tempo I – Tema. Allegro –	4:47
6	Variazione I. Poco più mosso –	0:34
7	Variazione II. Risoluto –	0:31
8	Variazione III. [] –	1:39
9	Variazione IV. Molto meno mosso (Allegretto moderato) –	1:05
10	Variazione V. Più mosso –	1:00
11	Variazione VI. Ancora più mosso (Allegro) –	0:41
12	Variazione VII. Walzer. Tempo giusto –	2:17
13	Variazione VIII. Alla marcia. Allegro moderato –	1:25
14	Variazione IX. Presto – Andante rubato –	1:54
15	Variazione X. Passacaglia. Adagio non troppo – Un poco più mosso – Ancora più mosso e poco a poco accelerando – Allegro maestoso, sempre accelerando –	3:48
16	Variazione XI. Choral. Maestoso –	1:33
17	Finale. Fugato. Allegro vivace – Tempo del Tema – Molto allegro	3:09

Suite from 'The Veil of Pierrette', Op. 18 (1908–09) 16:23

(Der Schleier der Pierrette)

Pantomime in Three Pictures after Arthur Schnitzler (1862–1931)

Ernst von Schuch in Verehrung und Dankbarkeit zugeeignet

18	1	Pierrot's Love-lament	4:48
19	2	Waltz-rondo	2:37
20	3	Merry Funeral March	2:42
21	4	Wedding Waltz	5:56
			TT 69:58

COMPACT DISC FOUR

Symphonic Minutes, Op. 36 (1933) 14:41

(Szimfónikus percek)

1	I	Capriccio. Vivacissimo possibile	2:32
2	II	Rapsodia. Andante	3:46
3	III	Scherzo. Allegro vivace	1:34
4	IV	Tema con Variazioni. Andante poco moto	4:05
5	V	Rondo. Presto	2:27

Symphony No. 2, Op. 40 (1943 – 44, revised 1953 – 56)
in E major • in E-Dur • en mi majeur

49:48

6	I	Allegro con brio, ma energico e appassionato	13:39
7	II	Adagio pastorale, molto con sentimento	12:16
8	III	Burla. Allegro	4:29
9	IV	Introduzione. Andante –	1:06
10		Tema. Adagio –	1:51
11		Variazione I. Più mosso (Andante) –	1:12
12		Variazione II. Più mosso, animato, risoluto –	0:52
13		Variazione III. Meno mosso (quasi il tempo del tema) –	1:20
14		Variazione IV. Più mosso, tempestuoso (Circa doppio movimento) –	1:31
15		Variazione V. Adagio (mezzo movimento) –	1:26
16		Fuga. Adagio ma non troppo –	6:04
17		Coda. Andante maestoso – Alla marcia	3:39

TT 64:43

COMPACT DISC FIVE

Concerto No. 2, Op. 43 (1949–50)[†] **31:08**
in C minor • in c-Moll • en ut mineur
for Violin and Orchestra
To Frances Magnes

- | | | | |
|---|-----|---|-------|
| 1 | I | Allegro molto moderato | 11:04 |
| 2 | II | Intermezzo. Allegro comodo e scherzando | 3:51 |
| 3 | III | Adagio molto sostenuto – | 9:35 |
| 4 | IV | Allegro risoluto e giocoso | 6:26 |

Concertino, Op. 45 (1952)[‡] **15:43**
for Harp and Chamber Orchestra

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 5 | Andante – Allegro ma non troppo – A tempo – Molto allegro –
Tempo II – Tempo I – | 7:06 |
| 6 | Allegretto vivace – Più mosso – | 3:48 |
| 7 | Adagio non troppo | 4:46 |

Concerto No. 2, Op. 42 (1946 – 47)*

in B minor • in h-Moll • en si mineur
for Piano and Orchestra

28:49

8 I Allegro – Legato – Animato – Meno mosso – A tempo – 13:07

9 II Adagio, poco rubato – 7:56

10 III Allegro vivace – Più mosso – A tempo 7:44

TT 76:04

James Ehnes violin[†]

Howard Shelley piano*

Clifford Lantaff harp[†]

BBC Philharmonic

Yuri Torchinsky (CDs 1 and 2) • **Oran Shiran** (CD 4) leaders

Matthias Bamert



© Paul Marc Mitchell

Howard Shelley

Dohnányi: Orchestral Works

COMPACT DISC ONE

Introduction

Given the fluidity of national borders and the imperial losses and gains over the centuries in central Europe, we should perhaps not find it surprising that musical nationalism held such sway in the region from the romantic era onwards. Take the home city of Ernst von (born Ernő) Dohnányi (1877 – 1960), Bratislava, on the Danube between Vienna and Budapest. Since the sixteenth century it has gone from being Pozsony, the capital city, and later also the coronation city, of Hungary (as the Turks were about to overrun Buda), through being a relative backwater in the Austro-Hungarian Empire with a largely German-speaking population who called the city Pressburg, to being the second city of the newly united Czechoslovakia from 1919 and since 1993 the capital of an independent Slovakia.

In the nineteenth century, although small-scale in terms of administration and population, Pozsony / Pressburg had a strong cultural life and boasted one of the oldest universities in the region. Liszt launched his career as a pianist there in 1820 and the city

bore other famous musical sons in addition to Dohnányi, including Johann Nepomuk Hummel. The schoolboy Béla Bartók moved with his family to the city in the 1890s in search of an environment conducive to his musical gifts and found himself at the same Catholic Gymnasium as Dohnányi, the latter four years his senior. From there blossomed a friendship between two of the major composers who, with Kodály, would define Hungarian music over the next half century.

Despite their similar upbringing and education – both went on to study at the Budapest Academy and emerged as composer-pianists of the first order – their musical paths soon diverged, however. Where Bartók charged ahead as one of the leading musical modernists, in a style coloured by the central European folk music which he had collected as a young man, Dohnányi only occasionally approached what could be termed a 'national style', instead extending the more conservative and romantic manner of Brahms well into the twentieth century. This more cosmopolitan view can be seen as a further reaction to the central European perception of nationhood, and it is interesting to find Dohnányi venturing

into one of his most distinctively Hungarian phases in the early 1920s, one of the political ramifications of the First World War having been the loss of a significant part of his country's former territory.

Ruralia hungarica

Possibly inspired by conducting the premiere of Bartók's *Dance Suite* – which, with his own Festival Overture (*Ünnepi nyitány*), Op. 31 and Kodály's *Psalmus hungaricus*, had been commissioned in 1923 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the unification of Buda and Pest – a year later he completed his own celebration of Hungarian folk music, *Ruralia hungarica*, Op. 32. Moreover, while Bartók later admitted that the themes in the *Dance Suite* were his own and pastiche, Dohnányi incorporated authentic melodies, taken from a volume which Bartók and Kodály had published in that same fiftieth anniversary year, containing a conspectus of the Hungarian folksongs of Transylvania (a former Hungarian land, ceded to Romania in 1920). In fact, Dohnányi wrote four works with the title *Ruralia hungarica*: a suite of seven movements for piano solo (Op. 32a), arrangements of three of them for violin and piano (Op. 32c), a single movement for cello and piano (Op. 32d), and the present work of five movements for orchestra (Op. 32b), not all of which are exact transcriptions from the version for piano.

The pastoral introduction to the first movement of this orchestral version is dominated by oboe and solo strings and leads into a clarinet melody deriving from a song about a weeping willow. A more energetic interruption on the strings heralds a climax on the full orchestra, which soon subsides to the music of the introduction. The second movement is a rondo the pentatonic melodies of which have an almost oriental character, while the third is a gentle intermezzo based on a children's game song. The emotional core of the work is found in the fourth movement, *Adagio non troppo*, which uses the melody of a ballad about a girl married off into an alien country for her depravity, as well as a lament of a young orphan. The finale is a parody of the form and manner of a *verbunkos*, a Hungarian recruitment song, and reveals the best of Dohnányi's skills in orchestration, something on which Bartók is reputed to have made favourable comments when he read the score in 1924.

Piano Concerto No. 1

On the whole, however, Dohnányi's style was far less overtly Hungarian than that of Bartók or Kodály. Dohnányi was happy to develop the broader *lingua franca* of central European romanticism as exemplified by the music of Brahms. As it happened, the Hamburg-born master died in Vienna barely a couple of

months before the young Dohnányi received his graduation diploma from the Budapest Academy, in 1897, so Brahms's was very much the music of the age for those who rejected the more revolutionary, Wagnerian advances. Dohnányi spent the summer of 1897 mapping out the start of his career with the help of his mentor, Eugen d'Albert (1864–1932), the Glasgow-born composer-pianist of German-Italian-French origins, and when he began his Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 5 later the same year, he dedicated it to d'Albert. The new work was designed as a vehicle to display the talents of the phenomenally gifted young pianist as a performer and composer; it duly won him the Bösendorfer Prize when it was premiered in 1899 and set him up as the accepted successor to Liszt in the Hungarian musical world.

The concerto begins *Adagio maestoso* and introduces what soon proves to be the work's motto theme: a full orchestral statement is twice broken by a short piano Cadenza featuring music of a tragic cast that will make its presence felt again later in the work. The subdued arrival of the *Allegro* on the strings almost hides the fact that the new theme is derived from the distinctive first three notes of the motto. A brief piano trill heralds the most Brahmsian of second-subject themes, one complete with the parallel sixths and the rhythms favoured by the late master and heard

first on the strings, then on the solo piano. Each of the two themes is developed until a hint at a brass chorale ushers in a new, more mysterious mood in which the main themes seem to brush past rather than assert themselves. The tension again accumulates, but this time the rising piano scales bring a return to the opening bars and a ravishing coda which establishes the major key through the intervention of a solo violin.

The slow movement begins in an almost Brucknerian manner, with a steady *pizzicato* tread accompanying a long-breathed theme on the horn, later joined in counterpoint by the violas. The solo piano theme that follows is recognisable in outline from the music of the first movement and the two ideas alternate in some of the most rhapsodic writing that Dohnányi ever produced. Such is the subtlety of his compositional processes that perhaps only with its reappearance on the full brass at the movement's climax do we realise that the opening horn theme is in fact the chorale heard fleetingly towards the end of the first movement.

The concerto's motto idea comes into its own in the finale where it powers the forward-moving *Vivace*, but that same chorale gradually assumes more importance, beginning with two hymn-like interruptions of the massive Cadenza that lies at the movement's heart. The *Vivace* music eventually reasserts itself, but

still makes way for a magnificent apotheosis of the chorale theme, on the full wind and brass against pounding scales and arpeggios from the soloist, before the music rushes headlong to its conclusion.

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COMPACT DISC TWO

Introduction

As the most musically conservative member of the generation in Hungary that also produced Bartók and Kodály, Dohnányi naturally gravitated towards the more conventional musical forms. His earliest mature works garnered the praise of that arch-classicist Brahms, who in 1895 arranged the first Viennese performance of his Op. 1, a Piano Quintet in C minor. The next milestone in his progress was the first of his two piano concertos, which won Dohnányi the Bösendorfer Prize in 1899 and helped launch his international career both as a composer and as a pianist, to the extent that he was soon seen as the natural successor to Liszt in both fields.

It was at this point, in 1900, at the age of twenty-three, that Dohnányi felt ready to embark on his first symphony. Only three years earlier, he had graduated from the Budapest Academy, emerging as that institution's first internationally recognised success and keen to

be seen as Hungary's leading young composer. The influences of both Liszt and Brahms were strong in his early works, which combine the motivic workings of the one with the classical formal preoccupations of the other.

Symphony No. 1

In his First Symphony there is also something of Bruckner in the hushed D minor opening and the horn and trumpet theme that soon emerges – and, indeed, in the orchestral unisons that Dohnányi deploys at some of the dramatic climaxes. But the melancholy harmonies are his own, as is the generally rhapsodic flow of his musical ideas. That first horn / trumpet idea is gradually broken up into motifs and built back up again into a magnificent, *fortissimo* tutti statement; the music then subsides quickly into the second subject, a warmly flowing B major theme on the violas, accompanied by bassoons and lower strings. But even here, one of the nagging motifs from the first theme intervenes and the mood grows more martial, led by an angry idea in dotted rhythm. The second theme reappears on oboe and then in all its glory in the full orchestra. More development of all the material follows. There are several false starts to the recapitulation on the way back to the grandiose re-entry of the horn / trumpet theme on full orchestra, and the second subject now follows in grand string unison, the woodwind bringing the dotted-rhythm motif into line. A

slower coda swells to one last attempt at the main theme and the movement ends in an unconquered D minor.

The first of the Symphony's two slow movements opens with a solo for the cor anglais, a melancholy theme in A minor that is subjected to a diffuse variation treatment. It is here, perhaps, that Dohnányi's early mastery of the orchestra is most apparent (it was only Dohnányi's second orchestral work, after the First Piano Concerto): the central portion of the movement comprises a series of ever-more elaborate wind solos rhapsodising on the contours of the cor anglais theme and intertwining with *tremolo* strings and harp in a lush *mêlée* of sound.

The middle movement is a fierce Scherzo in F major / minor, dominated by the insistent opening motif and characterised by frequent changes of metre, including series of bars in 5 / 4 time. The Intermezzo that follows could hardly be more of a contrast. The orchestra is reduced to strings, oboes, and bassoons and the movement is effectively a miniature rhapsody in B major for a solo viola.

The dramatic D minor opening of the Finale proclaims that the battle is not yet won. But after a short pause a gentler theme is introduced on the flutes, which is shortly to become the subject of a set of variations. The form of this movement is very similar to that which Dohnányi would adopt some fifty years

later in his Second Symphony, in both cases a handful of variations followed by a fugue. Here, the theme is first presented in full on the strings, then picked up by oboes and clarinets. For the first of the variations, the theme moves to *pizzicato* cellos and basses; the second has the air of a fanfare, while the third is a more tranquil episode with the theme on cellos and clarinets; in the fourth the theme resembles a stately chorale, in the brass. The tempo and excitement gradually pick up in the approach to the energetic fugue, its subject taken from the movement's introduction and ultimately derived from the theme, in horn and trumpet, which opened the Symphony. The movement ends in a hard-won blaze of D major.

American Rhapsody

By the time he died, in New York in 1960, Dohnányi had been an American resident for eleven years. He had originally left his native Hungary in the wake of the occupation by the Nazis, whose edicts on the employment of Jewish musicians he had defied as long as he could in his Philharmonic Society. But rather than leave the Nazi sway immediately, he first moved to Austria, which drew the criticism that he had gone over to the enemy. He had at least escaped the Communist take-over that followed the end of the war, and within a few years he had won the post of a piano professor and composer-in-residence at Florida State

University in Tallahassee. Four years later, in 1953, he composed his last work for orchestra, the *American Rhapsody*.

There are parallels between the *American Rhapsody* and that more famous work penned by a central European in America, the Symphony 'From the New World' by Antonín Dvořák. Both, for all their references to the music of the USA, are as much nostalgic odes to their homelands – Dohnányi must have sensed that he would never make it home to Hungary. His Rhapsody certainly conveys little of the music of twentieth-century America – it alludes more to an idealised New World of barn dances and adventurous pioneers than to the city environment one might have expected to inspire such an urbane composer. There is also a feeling of Hungarian folk music in the opening section – and is that an allusion to Johann Strauss's *An der schönen blauen Donau* (the river flows through his native Budapest) in the first few bars? Still, where Dohnányi allows overtly American elements to rise to the surface – the spiritual-like tune for the cor anglais after the opening, the revivalist folk tunes of the middle section, and the catchy concluding barn dance – the warm romanticism and rhythmic energy of the music make for a very personal tribute to his adopted country.

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COMPACT DISC THREE

Introduction

If we consider the wide range of activities that occupied Dohnányi during his working life, it soon becomes apparent why his compositional output is relatively small. Although he lived to be eighty-three, he left only forty-eight opus numbers to his name and his time was divided among a variety of musical activities. As a pianist, he was regarded as the successor to Liszt and could be heard on both sides of the Atlantic regularly until the First World War. In the meantime, he had distinguished himself as a teacher of piano at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik and, from 1919, was effectively in charge of the Budapest Academy of Music. He was also a busy conductor, taking charge of orchestras in Europe and America in the years between the two world wars.

The Veil of Pierrette

Dohnányi did, however, find the time between 1911 and 1927 to write three operas. But preceding them came a less ambitious dramatic work, a mimed entertainment in three Pictures based on a work by the Viennese dramatist and novelist Arthur Schnitzler (1862 – 1931). *The Veil of Pierrette* (*Der Schleier der Pierrette*) was composed in 1908 – 09 and first performed in Dresden in 1910. Four published scenes from the mime form a

work akin to a suite. 'Pierrot's Love-lament' constitutes the prelude and first scene of the entertainment. Divided strings conjure up a tearful theme from the depths, which gradually builds to a dramatic climax; an oboe theme, already hinted at, begins a new section in which wind solos intertwine over a nervous accompaniment; the opening music returns and dies away to nothing. The rest of the suite, though, is pure fun. The second movement is a charming 'Waltz-rondo', a parody of a Straussian waltz, and there is more Viennese character in the 'Merry Funeral March' that follows, though here the target seems to be Mahler. The final movement, 'Wedding Waltz', is again Straussian in character (Johann rather than Richard – *Der Rosenkavalier* was not premiered until a few months after Dohnányi's pantomime, though also in Dresden).

Variations on a Nursery Theme

If *The Veil of Pierrette* has faded from view since its first performance, two other works by Dohnányi from roughly the same period have been luckier. The Suite in F sharp minor, also composed in 1908–09, was first heard in Budapest in 1910, conducted by the composer, and the Variations on a Nursery Theme, indisputably his most popular work, was written five years later and premiered in Berlin on 17 February 1916, Dohnányi this time at the piano.

The Variations further the parody element in *Pierrette* – written 'for the enjoyment of humorous people and the annoyance of others'. Taking the most blameless of little themes – known in its original French as 'Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman' and in English as 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star' – Dohnányi subjects it to some of the most grotesque and comical transformations possible, poking fun at a wide range of other composers on the way. His skills as a composer and pianist are combined to wonderful effect: the tricky piano writing shows what an accomplished player he was, while the music itself is quick-witted and constantly inventive.

The introduction to the work is portentous, making the theme, when it finally appears on the solo piano, sound all the more innocent by comparison. Like Mozart, who also famously used the theme, Dohnányi subjects it to twelve variations, including the Finale. In Variation I, the piano heads off up the keyboard while the theme stays within its natural limits on *pizzicato* strings. No. II turns it into a skittish march; by No. III, the simple melody is lost amid a new, romantic theme in Brahmsian sixths on the strings and chromatics from the piano; No. IV is more march-like again, the orchestra restricted to the bassoon and flute families. In Variation V, the theme is heard clearly on tubular bells, while piano and harp jingle away in the upper reaches, the figuration carrying on into

Variation VI, in which the theme is now reduced to its harmonic shell.

For Variation VII, it is back into waltz territory, with an even more outrageous parody than those in *Pierrette*, and No. VIII is yet another march, this time with shades of Brahms's *Akademische Festouvertüre* (Academic Festival Overture). Variation IX is a witty scherzo that brings both Dukas (*L'Apprenti sorcier* [The Sorcerer's Apprentice]) and Saint-Saëns (*Danse macabre*) to mind and Variation X is a romantic Passacaglia, in which the theme is repeated several times in the bass part while all sorts of harmonic and melodic goings-on develop above it. Variation XI is a chorale, the phrases of the nursery tune intoned grandly between passages of piano figuration. The Finale is a witty *fugato*, but just before the end the theme returns in all its simplicity; it is quickly overtaken, however, by a rip-roaring dash to the double bar line.

Suite in F sharp minor

Variation form was probably Dohnányi's favourite structural device – apart from the Variations on a Nursery Theme, the two symphonies by Dohnányi conclude with grand sets of variations and his other most expansive orchestral work, the Suite in F sharp minor, opens with one. The theme here is presented by a small woodwind ensemble before being taken up by the upper strings. The six variations that

follow are all widely differentiated in mood and instrumentation. In the first, the theme is broken up as an accompanying figure to a rhapsodic clarinet line; in the second, horns turn it into a challenging motif that disintegrates as the woodwind take it up; Variation III returns to a tranquil mood and a lush, romantic development of the theme; the fourth begins mysteriously but builds to a dramatic climax; Variation V is a rapid, scherzo-like section; and the sixth, after an impressive opening, with blazing brass, eventually dies away to a peaceful close, the theme returning to the mood of the beginning.

The second movement is a quirky Scherzo, the theme of its swinging trio returning towards the end of the movement on all four horns. The *Romanza* features some of Dohnányi's characteristically diaphanous orchestration, divided strings, harps, and woodwind counterpoint to the fore. The Suite's finale is a Rondo that in its melodic shapes would seem to be influenced by Mahler – the Rondo-finale of his Fifth Symphony, in particular – but the ever-changing chromatic harmonies are pure Dohnányi. Just before the end, the frenzied activity ceases and there is one more glimpse of the theme of the variations from the first movement; then the music of the rondo returns and tears away to the end.

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COMPACT DISC FOUR

Introduction

As the oldest of the generation of Hungarian composers who brought their national music into the twentieth century, Dohnányi travelled the shortest musical distance. Unlike Bartók (b. 1881) and Kodály (b. 1882), who to greater and lesser extents founded a distinct stream of modernism founded on their country's native folk music, Dohnányi distinguished himself more as a cosmopolitan conservative. While his name as a composer has been immortalised by his incomparable *Variations on a Nursery Theme* (1914), he was arguably better known in his lifetime as a teacher, pianist, conductor, and musical administrator. Having turned down the opportunity of a foreign musical education (the choice of most Hungarians of note before him) in favour of studies at the Budapest Academy, Dohnányi went on to dazzle Europe and America with his piano playing, taught for ten years at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik, and began to establish his reputation as a composer, writing piano and chamber works. In 1915 he returned to Budapest, where four years later he became director of the Academy. However, he was removed when, soon after, in the turmoil following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Miklós Horthy's anti-liberal regime came to power. But Dohnányi channelled his

activities into other musical areas, particularly as conductor of the Budapest Philharmonic Society, where he programmed the new music of Bartók and Kodály whenever he could. He was reappointed to the Academy as a professor in 1928 and by 1934 was again its director, a post he held until the enactment of anti-Jewish legislation, in 1941, meant that he could tolerate his position no more.

Symphonic Minutes

It was during these years at the Academy, some of the busiest of his life, when he was also in charge of music for Hungarian Radio as well as regularly touring as conductor and pianist on both sides of the Atlantic, that Dohnányi composed his *Symphonic Minutes* (*Szimfónikus percek* in Hungarian). This suite of five short movements was written in 1933 for the Budapest Philharmonic Society. It consists of a glitteringly scored *Capriccio*, a *Rapsodia* the nostalgic theme of which passes among the woodwind instruments before the movement builds to a powerful climax; a metrically irregular Scherzo; a set of *Variazioni* on a simple, folk-like theme; and a 'moto perpetuo' Rondo.

Symphony No. 2

By the end of the thirties, Hungary had fallen in with the German Nazi regime. Dohnányi did as much as he could to fight the political

effects on artistic life during the early years of the Second World War. He managed to keep all the Jewish members of his orchestra in their posts until as late as the spring of 1944, when Germany occupied the country and set up a puppet regime which immediately initiated a campaign of terror against dissidents and Jews. He had to disband the orchestra and, a month after the Soviet invasion in October, left Hungary for Austria – a controversial move in the eyes of many of his colleagues and compatriots. In the midst of this mayhem, Dohnányi composed his Second Symphony (he wrote only two), a four-movement work in the key of E major, scored for a large orchestra including quadruple woodwind, eight horns, and four trumpets. After the war had ended, he remained abroad and began to re-establish his pre-war international fame. In 1949 he emigrated permanently to the United States of America, where he became composer-in-residence at Florida State University in Tallahassee. There, in the mid-fifties, he revised the Second Symphony in one of his last floods of creative energy; he died in 1960.

It is difficult to surmise how much the work was affected by external events, especially given the twelve- to thirteen-year span of the composition and revision of the symphony, but something of the stresses and strains of living in wartime Budapest is surely at the heart of the music of the first movement. It opens with

a long, striding, unison theme that gradually picks up harmonic dimension and rhythmic variety as it proceeds. A climax on a chord of E major subsides into a more lyrical idea on the violas, which itself builds to a new climax underpinned by insistent *staccato* chords. A more obviously romantic idea then emerges on the cellos and first horn, but through much of the movement there is the insistent tread of the 3/4 metre, which at times has an almost militaristic intensity.

The second movement inhabits a completely different world. This *Adagio pastorale* develops two main themes, the first heard on cor anglais and three flutes at the opening, the second a rich, ardent melody introduced by the strings shortly afterwards. Further ideas emerge as the texture gradually fills out. The scherzo performs a further complete change of mood. Marked *Burla*, it is a grotesque, circus-like parody of a quick march, with squawking woodwind, whining trumpets, swooning trombones, and a helter-skelter of a conclusion.

The sombre mood returns in the finale, a set of variations on J.S. Bach's chorale 'Komm, süßer Tod, Komm, sel'ge Ruh!' (Come, sweet death, come, blissful peace!), which is first heard on the strings in its original harmonisation after a rhapsodic introduction. There are five variations: the first turns the chorale melody into a series of appoggiaturas as accompaniment to an expressive theme on

the horn; the second bursts forth with *marcato* figures over fragments of the chorale; the third variation becomes more expansive again, the fourth is tempestuous and rhythmically obsessive, the fifth an incandescently scored *Adagio*. There follows a fully worked-out fugue on Bach's theme, beginning softly in the strings and gradually amassing the whole orchestra around it, eventually accelerating to a climax. At this point the fugue subject is combined with the theme that opened the symphony, on the trumpet and other brass. A coda in the style of a march, based on the same original theme, brings the work to a triumphant E major conclusion.

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COMPACT DISC FIVE

Introduction

The three works presented on this last disc were all written within a few years of one another, between the late 1940s and early 1950s. Dohnányi was in his seventies by this stage, but his powers of musical imagination as a composer, conductor, and pianist were unimpaired. However, his life over the previous decade had hardly been easy. By the 1930s he had for many years been established at the head of Hungary's musical pantheon, alongside Kodály and Bartók, and was fêted wherever

he went, throughout the musical world. He was head of the Budapest Academy of Music, chief conductor of the Budapest Philharmonic Society, as well as music director of Hungarian Radio, giving some 120 performances a year while still finding the time to compose. But his standing in his own country was not to last. Although by all accounts politically naïve, if not apolitical, he spent the early war years vigorously fighting anti-Jewish legislation until the German occupation of Hungary forced him to disband his orchestra. And in 1945 he lost two of his sons (one of them the father of the conductor Christoph von Dohnányi), both executed for their part in the plot to assassinate Hitler. Yet when he decided to move to Austria in the same year, he was branded a traitor to his roots and the bad-mouthing continued from the fledgling Communist regime in Hungary, which accused him of perpetuating a Germanic, specifically Brahmsian tradition rather than creating a Hungarian one.

In the face of this antagonism, Dohnányi attempted to revive his concert career; since the beginning of the century he had been renowned as one of the greatest living pianists. Ultimately, however, he had to seek refuge for his family from Europe's growing post-war political divide by emigrating first to Argentina, then to the USA. In 1949 he found a post as resident pianist and composer at Florida State

University in Tallahassee, where he found renewed vigour – and respect – as a composer, pianist, and teacher. Active to the end, he gave his last public recital in 1959 and was in New York, making recordings, when he died, in February 1960, at the age of eighty-two.

His longevity has counted against him in the sense that his musical style did not travel as far as he did. All three concertos heard here bear the hallmarks of a musical language untouched either by the modernism of Bartók (let alone more extreme post-war developments) or the folk-imbued manner of Kodály. Yet, in its post-Brahmsian romanticism his music can stand alongside that of such similar refugees from modernity as Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Serge Rachmaninoff, or Richard Strauss in its ability to continue to find new and fresh things to say in a time-honoured language.

Piano Concerto No. 2

Fifty years separate the First Piano Concerto by Dohnányi from Piano Concerto No. 2 in B minor, Op. 42, composed in 1946–47, though the difference in style between them is more a case of growth in sophistication – both in orchestration and the writing for the piano – than tonal advance.

The first movement begins as it means to go on, with a bold initial statement and a surging theme on the horns, accompanied by Rachmaninoff-like arpeggios from the soloist.

The *Adagio* – a more gently scored interlude in G minor – follows without a break, as eventually does the ebullient finale. This *Allegro vivace* harks back to the wit of the Variations on a Nursery Theme, but also brings with it a surprising hint of Shostakovich – and is that a sly reference, half-way through, to the finale of Rachmaninoff's Third Concerto? Whatever, it is a thoroughly engaging work and notable for being perhaps the last substantial piano concerto in the grand romantic tradition. Given the time at which it was written – during his extensive post-war British tour – Dohnányi undoubtedly intended it to help bolster his reputation as a performer, and he eventually committed it to disc himself, a mid-1950s recording under Adrian Boult's direction, which has yet to be made available as a CD.

Violin Concerto No. 2

The gap between the two violin concertos is not quite so extreme (thirty-five years), but again the language is remarkably consistent. Violin Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 43 was composed in Tallahassee in 1949–50. It is roughly contemporaneous, then, with the violin concertos of Barber (1939) and Korngold (1945) and stands comparison with those indulgently lush masterpieces rather well. It is unusual, though, in being written for an orchestra without violins; Dohnányi is said to have enjoyed the idea of the soloist being the

only violinist on stage. It was first performed in April 1951 by the violinist Frances Magnes and the Florida Symphony Orchestra under the composer's baton.

The minor-key modality of the opening *Allegro molto moderato* has an unmistakable Hungarian flavour. The movement pairs yearning, lyrical melody with more rhythmically rumbustious writing, in particular a quirky, fugal-style second main theme. The short Intermezzo – effectively a scherzo – sounds at times as if it has escaped from Brahms's set of Hungarian Dances, though manifesting Dohnányi's characteristic constant changes of key. Similarly, the slow movement begins with a broad Brahmsian theme, but has enough harmonic twists and turns to mark it out as pure Dohnányi. A linking passage recalling earlier themes from the work leads straight into the frisky finale, a rondo, its main theme recognisably derived from the first movement's *fugato* idea. A short cadenza, in which the soloist is accompanied by four unison horns, and an energetic recall of earlier themes bring the work to a close.

Concertino

The Concertino for harp and chamber orchestra, Op. 45 is again a product of the Tallahassee years, composed in 1952, and was the penultimate work that Dohnányi would compose for orchestra; only the *American*

Rhapsody would follow, a year later. If that work celebrated the composer's new-found home, the Concertino seems to hark back, with a certain nostalgia, to the Hungary of Dohnányi's birth. It is cast in a single span that encompasses three recognisable sub-movements: a languid opening *Andante*, a skittering central scherzo, and a heartfelt, melancholy, closing *Adagio non troppo*. Dohnányi's mastery in writing for the harp is second to none and the instrument is beautifully intertwined with the small accompanying orchestra of solo wind and strings.

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Known for his virtuosity and probing musicianship, the violinist and violist **James Ehnes** is widely considered one of the most dynamic and exciting performers in classical music. He has performed in more than thirty-five countries on five continents, appearing regularly with the world's foremost orchestras and conductors. His many recordings, featuring repertoire ranging from Bach's Sonatas and Partitas to Prokofiev's Concertos and Sonatas, have received numerous international awards, including a Grammy, a *Gramophone* Award, and eleven Junos. Born in Canada in 1976, James Ehnes began violin studies at the age of four, and at nine became a protégé of the

noted violinist Francis Chaplin. He studied with Sally Thomas at the Meadowmount School of Music and, from 1993 to 1997, at The Juilliard School, winning the Peter Mennin Prize for Outstanding Achievement and Leadership in Music upon his graduation. He is a Member of the Order of Canada, holds a Doctor of Music degree (*honoris causa*) from Brandon University, and was the youngest person ever elected to the Royal Society of Canada. James Ehnes plays the 'Marsick' Stradivarius of 1715. www.jamesehnes.com

As a pianist, conductor, and recording artist, **Howard Shelley** OBE has enjoyed a distinguished career since his highly acclaimed London debut in 1971, performing each season with renowned orchestras at major venues around the world. Much of his current work is in the combined role of conductor and soloist. He has been closely associated with the music of Rachmaninoff and has performed and recorded complete and award-winning cycles of that composer's solo piano works, concertos, and songs. He has made more than 150 commercial recordings, all of which have won outstanding reviews. He has appeared in several television documentaries, including *Mother Goose*, a documentary on Ravel, which won a Gold Medal at the New York Festivals Awards. As a conductor he has worked with all the major London orchestras and many other orchestras

in the UK and abroad, including the Hong Kong Philharmonic, Singapore Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Naples Philharmonic, and City of Mexico Philharmonic orchestras, the Münchner Symphoniker, Sinfonieorchester St. Gallen, and Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, and the Melbourne, West Australian, Adelaide, and Tasmanian symphony orchestras, as well as numerous European chamber orchestras. The London Mozart Players has recognised his long association with the orchestra by appointing him Conductor Laureate. In 1994 HRH The Prince of Wales conferred on Howard Shelley an Honorary Fellowship of the Royal College of Music, and in the 2009 New Year Honours List he was awarded an OBE for services to classical music.

A broadcasting orchestra based in Salford, the **BBC Philharmonic** performs at the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, tours the North of England, and welcomes audiences in its recording studio at MediaCityUK. It gives more than a hundred concerts each year, nearly all of which are broadcast on BBC Radio 3, the BBC's home of classical music. It also appears annually at the BBC Proms. Champion of British composers, the orchestra works with world-class artists from a range of genres and styles, and in 2014 revived BBC Philharmonic Presents, a series of collaborations across BBC Radio stations, showcasing its versatility and adventurous,

creative spirit. It is supported by Salford City Council, which enables a busy, burgeoning Learning and Outreach programme within schools and the local community. Working closely with the Council and other partners, including the Royal Northern College of Music, Salford University, and Greater Manchester Music Hub, it supports and nurtures emerging talent from across the North West.

The BBC Philharmonic is led by its Chief Conductor, Juanjo Mena, whose love of large-scale choral works and the music of his home country, Spain, has produced unforgettable performances in the concert hall and on disc. Its Principal Guest Conductor, John Storgårds, recorded a Sibelius symphony cycle with the orchestra in 2013 to much critical acclaim. The distinguished Austrian HK 'Nali' Gruber is Composer / Conductor and led the orchestra in a residency at the Wiener Konzerthaus in 2013. Its former principal conductors Gianandrea Noseda and Yan Pascal Tortelier also return regularly. Internationally renowned, it frequently travels to the continent and Asia, where the dates which had been cancelled when a tour of Japan was cut short by the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami in 2011, were completed in 2014. Having made more than 250 recordings with Chandos Records and sold around 900,000 albums, the BBC Philharmonic, along with the remarkable pianist Jean-Efflam Bavouzet and conductor

Gianandrea Noseda, won the 2014 *Gramophone* Concerto Award.

Having started his distinguished career at The Cleveland Orchestra, where he was Resident Conductor alongside the then Music Director, Lorin Maazel, **Matthias Bamert** has served as Music Director of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, and Swiss Radio Orchestra, Principal Guest Conductor of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, and Associate Guest Conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Music Director of the London Mozart Players for seven years, he brought the orchestra to the BBC Proms, Lucerne Festival, and Vienna in 1999, its fiftieth anniversary year, and to Japan, once more, in 2000. In the UK, he has worked frequently with the Philharmonia Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and BBC Philharmonic, appearing regularly at the BBC Proms. Principal Guest Conductor of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and, from 1985 to 1990, Director of the Glasgow contemporary music festival Musica Nova, he became renowned for his innovative programming, conducting the world premiere of works by the likes of Toru Takemitsu, John Casken, James MacMillan, and Wolfgang Rihm. Elsewhere, he has appeared with prominent orchestras in the US, Canada, Russia, Australia, and Japan.

During his acclaimed tenure as Director of the Lucerne Festival, from 1992 to 1998, he was also responsible for the opening of the KKL Concert Hall, instituted new Easter and Piano festivals, expanded the programme, and increased the Festival's activities several times over. During the 2015 / 2016 season he makes appearances with orchestras in Israel, Japan, South Korea,

and the US, among others. Matthias Bamert has amassed a discography of more than eighty discs, including, for Chandos, twenty-four CDs of works by 'Contemporaries of Mozart', as well as recordings of works by Sir Hubert Parry, Frank Martin, Roberto Gerhard, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Ernst von Dohnányi, and a number of Dutch composers.



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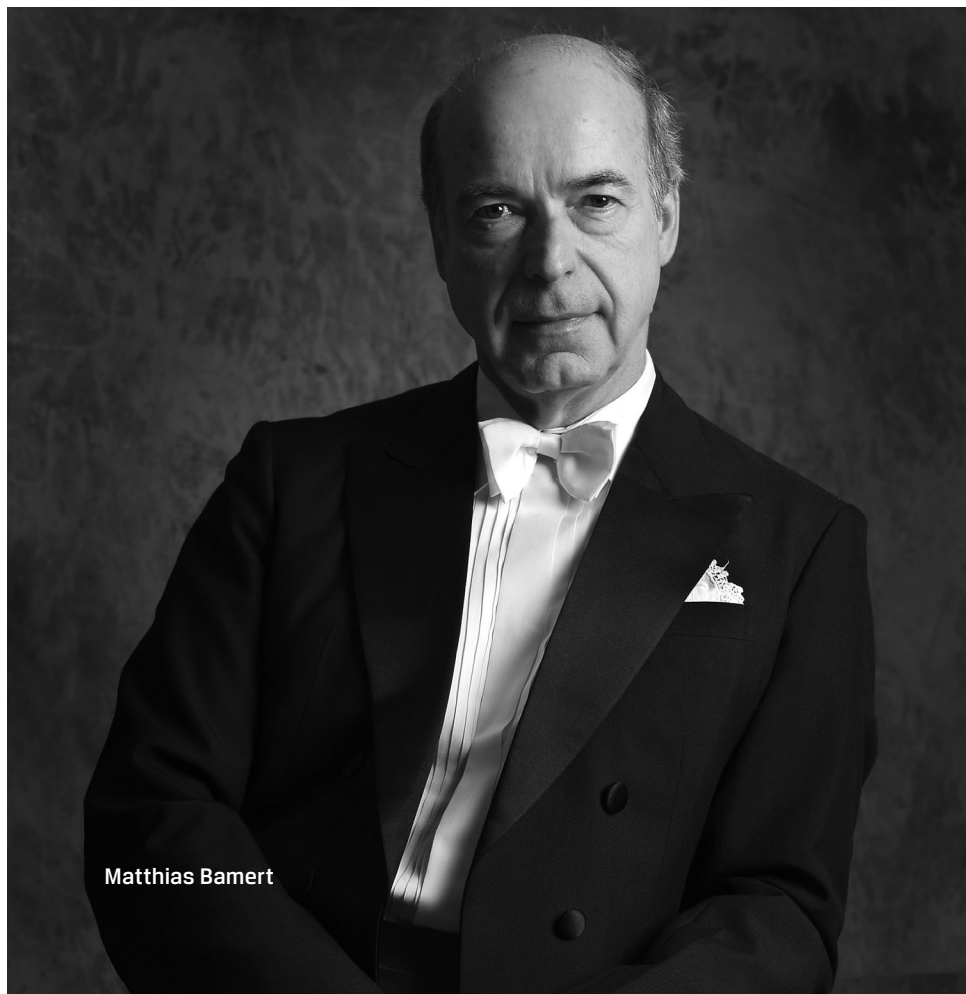


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Ernst von Dohnányi (1877–1960)

COMPACT DISC ONE

- | | | |
|-------|---|----------|
| 1 - 5 | Ruralia hungarica, Op. 32b (1924) | 24:56 |
| 6 - 8 | Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 5 (1897–98)* | 43:27 |
| | | TT 68:38 |

COMPACT DISC TWO

- | | | |
|--|---|----------|
| 1 - 5 | Symphony No. 1, Op. 9 (1900–01) | 53:32 |
| Gillian Callow cor anglais • John Bradbury clarinet • Janet Fisher viola | | |
| 6 | American Rhapsody, Op. 47 (1953) | 13:31 |
| | | TT 67:18 |

COMPACT DISC THREE

- | | | |
|---------|---|----------|
| 1 - 4 | Suite, Op. 19 (1908–09) | 28:39 |
| 5 - 17 | Variations on a Nursery Theme, Op. 25 (1914)* | 24:31 |
| 18 - 21 | Suite from 'The Veil of Pierrette', Op. 18 (1908–09) | 16:23 |
| | | TT 69:58 |

COMPACT DISC FOUR

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|--------|--|----------|
| 1 - 5 | Symphonic Minutes, Op. 36 (1933) | 14:41 |
| 6 - 17 | Symphony No. 2, Op. 40 (1943–44, revised 1953–56) | 49:48 |
| | | TT 64:43 |

COMPACT DISC FIVE

- | | | |
|--------|---|----------|
| 1 - 4 | Violin Concerto No. 2, Op. 43 (1949–50)† | 31:08 |
| 5 - 7 | Harp Concertino, Op. 45 (1952)‡ | 15:43 |
| 8 - 10 | Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 42 (1946–47)* | 28:49 |
| | | TT 76:04 |



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