



8.550280

DDD



**BRAHMS**  
**Symphony No. 3**  
**Serenade No. 1**

**BRT Philharmonic Orchestra, Brussels**  
**Alexander Rahbari, Conductor**



1990 Recording | Playing Time : 77'10"

## **Johannes Brahms (1833 - 1897)**

**Symphony No. 3 in F Major, Op. 90**

**Serenade No. 1 in D Major, Op. 11**

Hans Richter, who conducted the first performance of Brahms's Third Symphony in Vienna in December, 1883, referred to the work as the composer's *Eroica*, leading Eduard Hanslick to add that the First Symphony might be considered the *Appassionata* and the Second the *Pastoral*. The enemies of Brahms were predictably hostile. Hugo Wolf, a fervent Wagnerian, was to claim that there was more intelligence and emotion in a single cymbal stroke by Liszt than in all the three symphonies of Brahms that had then appeared, while to Wagner and his wife Cosima, Liszt's illegitimate daughter, Brahms was that rude, boorish man with his mediocre music. Wagner himself did not live to hear the Third Symphony, but nothing would have altered his resentment at comparisons between Brahms and the inimitable Beethoven, whose rightful successor he considered himself to be.

In the summer of 1883 Brahms took rooms in the spa town of Wiesbaden, perhaps to be near the young singer Hermine Spies, his Hermione without an 'o', whose musical abilities were to serve as inspiration for the Opus 96 and Opus 97 songs. At the age of fifty Brahms seemed a confirmed bachelor, but his sister, at least, had heard rumours of an impending engagement with Hermine, who had made her *début* at Wiesbaden the previous year. The affair came to nothing, although her *Johannes Passion* was to continue and Brahms himself was deeply moved by her death in 1893.

The Third Symphony opens with a brief figure played by the wind and this serves as a bass to the intense emotion of the succeeding theme proposed immediately by the violins. A second subject, in A major, is introduced by the clarinet, accompanied by a string drone bass, offering a pastoral contrast to the grandeur of the first theme. The opening motif reappears with particular

poignancy played by the French horn in the central development, which closes with a richness of counterpoint typical of the composer. The C major slow movement allows clarinets and bassoons to predominate in the statement of the principal theme, the same instruments introducing a second theme, followed by oboe and French horn. A moving cello theme in C minor starts the third movement, a world away from the traditional lighthearted scherzo. There is a Trio section, its sombre implications replaced by the return of the principal theme of the movement played by the French horn. The last movement, in which much of the argument of the symphony is concentrated, opens ominously, the mysterious initial activity of bassoons and strings, sotto voce, leading to a great storm of sound in which the composer shows all his power. The finale is massive in conception, ending not with the defiance of a Beethoven but with a gentle recollection of the first movement.

The Serenade in D major, Opus 11, was written during the months Brahms spent at the court of Detmold, its period of composition overlapping with that of the Serenade in A major. Like its companion it was published in 1860, the year of its first performance in Hanover, although it seems that it had at least been played through in Detmold in its original form as an octet by players from the orchestra, led by the violinist Karl Bargheer. Clara Schumann, an influential advocate of Brahms at this early stage in his career, insisted that the Serenade should be played at a benefit concert in Vienna in 1860, if she was to take part, and urged the two Serenades on other influential conductors.

In six movements, largely following earlier tradition, the Serenade owes something to Brahms's study of classical models. The surviving autograph suggests that the work was conceived as a symphony-serenade, and in length, at least, it is ambitious. It starts in a happy pastoral mood, to which a more ominous strain is added, in the tones of Beethoven, before becoming recognisably and unequivocally Brahms. The lilting first Scherzo, a contrast to the substantial opening Allegro, touches a rustic mood in its trio section, and is followed by a slow movement of classical contour, in which that most

characteristic of all instruments used by Brahms, the French horn, has its due prominence - otherwise classical in its scoring, the Serenade calls for four French horns rather than the two horns of the earlier period. The first Minuet lightens the tranquil mood with a moment of peasant jollity, delicately scored, before the intervention of a more poignant element, against the continuing ostinato accompaniment. The French horn introduces the second Scherzo, with more than a touch of Beethoven in pastoral mood. A final Rondo brings the Serenade to an end.

### **BRT Philharmonic Orchestra, Brussels**

The history of the BRT Philharmonic Orchestra, Brussels goes back to the birth of the Belgian Radio in the 1930's. After the well-known musicologist and promoter of contemporary music, Paul Collaer, had become head of the Music Department of the Belgian Radio, the orchestra, under its conductor Franz André, gained a world-wide reputation for its interpretations of the latest compositions of Stravinsky, Berg, Bartók, Hindemith and other 20th century composers. The orchestra gave the first European performance of Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra in Paris and the first West European performance of the Fourth Symphony by Shostakovich, and has, over the years, worked with many leading conductors, from Pierre Boulez, Paul Hindemith and Darius Milhaud to Lorin Maazel and Zubin Mehta.

In 1978 the Radio Symphony Orchestra was dissolved and both the Flemish and the French Radio divisions set up their own symphony orchestras. The Flemish network soon had a new orchestra, the BRT Philharmonic, with some 90 musicians and Fernand Terby became its principal conductor from 1978 to 1988. Since 1988, Alexander Rahbari has been the principal conductor and musical director of the new BRT Philharmonic Orchestra.

## **Alexander Rahbari**

Alexander Rahbari was born in Iran in 1948 and was trained as a conductor at the Vienna Music Academy as a pupil of von Einem, Swarowsky and Österreicher. On his return to Iran he was appointed director of the Teheran Conservatory of Music and took a leading position in the cultural development of his country. In 1977 he moved to Europe, winning first prize in the Besançon International Conductors' Competition and the Geneva silver medal. In 1979 he was invited by Herbert von Karajan to conduct the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and served as von Karajan's assistant in Salzburg. Rahbari's subsequent career has been highly successful, with concerts throughout the world and engagements in leading opera-houses. He is Principal Guest Conductor of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra and has conducted major orchestras throughout Europe, in Japan and in Canada. Alexander Rahbari is now a citizen of Austria.

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STEREO

**BRAHMS  
Symphony No. 3  
Serenade No. 1**

DDD

Playing  
Time :  
77'10"

**BRT Philharmonic Orchestra, Brussels  
Alexander Rahbari, Conductor**

**Symphony No. 3 in F Major, Op. 90**

- |          |                         |                |
|----------|-------------------------|----------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Allegro con brio</b> | <b>(10:22)</b> |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Andante</b>          | <b>(7:55)</b>  |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Poco allegretto</b>  | <b>(5:51)</b>  |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Allegro</b>          | <b>(8:44)</b>  |

**Serenade No. 1 in D Major, Op. 11**

- |           |                                    |                |
|-----------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>5</b>  | <b>Allegro molto</b>               | <b>(9:31)</b>  |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>Scherzo: Allegro non troppo</b> | <b>(8:13)</b>  |
| <b>7</b>  | <b>Adagio non troppo</b>           | <b>(12:57)</b> |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Menuetto I &amp; II</b>         | <b>(3:42)</b>  |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Scherzo: Allegro</b>            | <b>(3:01)</b>  |
| <b>10</b> | <b>Rondo: Allegro</b>              | <b>(6:15)</b>  |

Recorded at the Concert Hall of the Belgian Radio and  
Television in Brussels in June, 1990.

Producer: Günter Appenheimer

Engineer: Jo Tavernier

Music Notes: Keith Anderson

Cover: Alexander Rahbari

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