Collections: Orchestral

BRUNO WALTER: NBC Symphony Concerts 1939 Vol. I • Bruno Walter, cond and pn[1]; NBC SO • IMMORTAL PERFORMANCES IPCD 1144-5 (5 Discs: 391:34) Live: New York, March 11-April 8, 1939

MOZART Divertimento No. 15 in B-flat Major, K. 287**. [1]Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor,** K. 466**. Symphony No. 40 in G minor,** K. 550**. WEBER Overture to *Oberon.* HAYDN Symphony No. 92 in G Major. BRAHMS Symphony No. 1 in C minor,** op. 68**. CORELLI Concerto Grosso,** op. 6, no. 8**. BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 1 in C Major,** op. 21**. MASON *Suite After English Folk Songs*,** op. 32**. STRAUSS *Death and Transfiguration.* BERLIOZ *Le Corsaire* Overture*. La damnation de Faust*: *Menuet des follets*; *Ballet des sylphes*; *Marche hongroise. Symphonie fantastique.* WAGNER *A Faust Overture. Siegfried Idyll.* MAHLER Symphony No. 1 in D Major.**

Review by **Henry Fogel**

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This remarkable set may well cause you to revise your views about Bruno Walter, as it did me. I have always admired his conducting very strongly, but I also probably pigeon-holed him in my mind as a "genial" interpreter of the Austro-German repertoire. That image was implanted in many of us from his stereo recordings for Columbia made in the last decade of his life (Walter died at the age of 85 in 1962). As I came to know his earlier recordings, however, I began to recognize a more complex musical personality. The NBC radio broadcast performances captured here are positively incendiary, and while they retain many of the familiar virtues that marked Walter's conducting, they add to those a level of dramatic intensity that is quite special.

I will make some introductory comments before discussing the specifics of each concert. The superb accompanying notes in the program booklet, written by *Fanfare* colleague James A. Altena, give valuable information and insights, and provide very helpful comparisons of these performances with Walter recordings of the same repertoire.

Categorizing a performance style runs the risk of simplifying something that is quite complex. In general, Bruno Walter's tendencies were toward warmth and the establishment of a singing line while never burying subsidiary voices. Within the boundaries implied by this description, he could vary his approach considerably. The performances here lean, sometimes strongly, in the direction of quick tempos and sharper edges than was often the case with him. Altena points out that these performances in 1939 were Walter's first in front of an orchestra trained by Arturo Toscanini. Even over the brief span of five NBC Symphony concerts broadcast between March 11 and April 8 that year, one can hear an orchestra adjusting to Walter, and Walter adjusting to the orchestra in return.

There is another issue underlying the music-making here. As far back as 1933 Walter's life became difficult because of the rise of Hitler. Walter was born Jewish as Bruno Schlesinger in 1876 but converted to Christianity in 1898 when he was at the Riga Opera. When he returned his position as principal conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra in March, 1933, Walter

was forbidden to conduct a scheduled concert and was stripped of the post. He showed up to a scheduled concert of the Berlin Philharmonic the same month, but Nazi threats of a riot in the hall led to another cancellation (reprehensibly, Richard Strauss replaced Walter on the podium).

Walter moved to Vienna and was appointed artistic director of the Vienna State Opera, but after the *Anschluss* in 1938 he found himself without work and without a country. He was conducting in Amsterdam at the time of the *Anschluss*, but his eldest daughter Lotte was arrested in Vienna. Walter was able to get her released through influential connections. The marriage of his other daughter, Gretel, was falling apart (later, in August, her estranged husband would kill both Gretel and himself), and Walter was trying to find safe passage and housing for other family members. Musicians are, of course, no more able than other human beings to compartmentalize, and it is not illogical to suggest that the stress, drama, and rage that must have been boiling inside of Walter, and which persisted at a distance after he came to America, had an impact on these five broadcast concerts.

Immortal Performances has fit each concert on a single CD by retaining an abridged version of the broadcast commentary and applause. I will discuss each one separately.

March 11, 1939—All Mozart: Divertimento No. 15, K 287. **Piano Concerto No. 20**, K 466. **Symphony No. 40,** K 550

This concert represents Walter's first exposure to the NBC Symphony and, of course, the musicians' first exposure to him. Divertimento K 287 for strings and two horns was presented with some cuts (three of the six variations that make up the second movement), probably to fit NBC's broadcast time limitations. Interestingly, the Divertimento is the only one of the three performances here that fit my expectations, in that it is a warm, relaxed, and very flexible reading. Walter employs a greater degree of both *portamento* and *rubato* than would have been likely under Toscanini, and it is impressive how well the musicians seem to have adjusted to their Viennese guest.

In Piano Concerto No. 20, which Walter conducts from the piano, and Symphony No. 40, however, things are different. While Walter's flexibility and warmth did not completely desert him, they are present to a lesser degree, replaced by a driving intensity and sharper accenting than one hears in any number of Walter's other recordings of these two pieces. The NBC Symphony plays very well, and there is a clear sense of musicians carefully listening to and reacting to each other. In both his piano playing and conducting, I hear something of the Walter of later years, but to my ears those characteristics are not truly embodied in these performances.

March 18, 1939—Weber: *Oberon*: Overture. Haydn: Symphony No. 92, "Oxford." **Brahms: Symphony No. 1**

By the second week, it is clear that Walter and the musicians are beginning to understand each other. This is where the melding of Toscanini's incisiveness and Walter's more rounded attacks begin to sound as if they can live with each other. In addition to the crispness of orchestral attacks and releases, another marked difference between the two conductors was in their conception of sound. Walter, like most German and Austrian conductors, tended to build his orchestral sonority from the bottom up. Everything rested on a foundation established by the cellos, double basses, and lower brass. Toscanini's approach led to a less weighty, brighter

sonority. One problem for Walter's approach is that Studio 8H tended to work against his coloristic preferences, though even by this second week he clearly had adjusted to the point where he compensated to some degree for the dry acoustic.

The *Oberon* Overture performance is warm, vivid, and very well played by the NBC musicians. It makes me wish that conductors would regularly include pieces like this in their programs; Weber overtures used to be standard repertoire, and the smile brought by Walter's reading underscores the sad fact that they are far less commonly heard today. The Haydn "Oxford" Symphony also receives a buoyant performance, but it suffers in particular from the 8H sound when compared to Walter's studio recordings made a year earlier in Paris.

However, the Brahms First Symphony recorded here (and never released before) has become my favorite Walter recording of the piece. It is absolutely electric, even ferocious, in its momentum and drive. While listening to it I began to realize what must have been roiling inside him after everything he and his family were put through by the Nazis, added to the tension, more than five years later, of not knowing where they would eventually be able to settle (eventually, of course, it was the U.S.). The finale of this Brahms First is on fire from the introduction through the closing chords. While driving the NBC Symphony quickly, Walter pulls back hard for the chorale tune near the end. From that point onward he organizes the music perfectly. This is a performance not to be missed.

March 25, 1939—Corelli: Concerto Grosso in D, op. 6/5. **Beethoven: Symphony No. 1. Daniel Gregory Mason: *Suite After English Folk Songs*. Strauss: *Tod und Verklärung***

Walter's approach to the Corelli Concerto Grosso is certainly old-fashioned, as one would expect, but the reading is also lovely. There is a richness to the string playing that no modern conductor would encourage, and a weight to the opening chord implying that we are about to hear a Beethoven overture. But if you put aside the current received wisdom, you are likely to be seduced by the warmth and lovely singing tone of the strings, and the overall energy of the playing. Walter plays the harpsichord *continuo* (though it is often buried in the texture). The same blending of *cantabile* playing and kinetic energy marks the Beethoven First Symphony as well. This is the only live Walter recording of the work, and it is quicker than his studio recordings. In addition, the reading has a degree of dramatic tension and release that also goes beyond his studio efforts.

Walter maintained a friendship with the now obscure American composer Daniel Gregory Mason (1873–1953) and conducted three of his pieces during his career. Two symphonies by Mason were programmed with the New York Philharmonic, but here we get a work of slighter weight. Although English folk songs form the basis of Mason's suite, the orchestral treatment seems straight out of the central European Romantic style. (In his notes Altena compares it to Russian and Swedish folksong arrangements by Max Bruch, a very apt analogy.) Walter wasn't simply doing his duty to American music; he conducts with passion, energy, and affection. He balances the orchestral textures particularly carefully, so that we can hear Mason's skilled orchestration. is a lovely addition to both Walter's and Mason's discography.

Tod und Verklärung is given a phenomenally dramatic reading. The subject's fight against death is as powerful as I think I have ever encountered, and the following transfiguration

glows with a remarkable richness and beauty of orchestral color. Most impressively, Walter manages the transition from one to the other perfectly, with acutely judged adjustments of tempo and dynamics. The final climax is shattering. To give you an indication of the ferocity of this performance, its duration is 21:13. The closest timing for that in my collection (which contains 34 recorded performances) is Strauss' own, at 21:24. Furtwängler is almost a minute longer (22:05), and all the others are longer than that. Most of the quickness is concentrated in the central battle with death, which leaps out of the speakers. By the end of their third weekly concert together, it sounds to me as if the NBC players and Walter came to fully understand each other, and the orchestra found a way to give him what he asked for.

April 1, 1939—All Berlioz: *Le Corsaire; La damnation de Faust:* *Minuet of the Will of the Wisps; Dance of the Sylphs; Rákóczy March*. ***Symphonie fantastique***

For his fourth NBC concert in1939 Walter offered an all-Berlioz program. Berlioz is a composer we don't usually associate with the conductor, but in fact Walter consistently performed and recorded Berlioz's orchestral works. He had made a recording of the *Symphonie fantastique* with the Paris Conservatory Orchestra less than two months prior to this concert. The readings of *Le Corsair* and the excerpts from *La damnation de Faust* are superb. The former takes a bit of time to get warmed up, but once it does Walter's reading exhibits dramatic energy and brilliant orchestral colors. He has similar success with the *Faust* excerpts. The wit and insouciance of the "Minuet of the Will of the Wisps," the feather-light touch in the "Dance of the Sylphs," and the thrust of the *Rákóczy March* are present to an ideal degree.

I wish I could be as enthusiastic about the *Symphonie fantastique*. There is much to recommend it. Walter's attention to voicing and to subtle shifts of dynamics, along with his ability to tie the sprawling piece into a unified whole, are unique and valuable qualities. I also really like the touches of *portamento* in the string playing, particularly in the first three movements. However the second movement, "Un bal," turns rather heavy-footed, and the final two movements lack the dramatic excitement I have come to expect. This may well be a matter of personal taste, because Walter clearly has a great love for the music as he hears it, and as he conveys to the players.

April 8, 1939—Wagner: *A Faust Overture. Siegfried Idyll*. Mahler: Symphony No. 1

Walter's five-concert engagement by NBC concluded with music directly from the core of his repertoire—Wagner and Mahler. This is the most gratifying of all of these concerts, which should take nothing away, though, from the treasures contained in the previous four.

The two Wagner works receive lovely performances. The early *Faust Overture* is given a reading of surprising weight and concentrated tone, and *Siegfried Idyll* features more extremes of tempo and dynamics than Walter's beautiful 1953 studio recording with the New York Philharmonic. For its heartfelt warmth and tenderness, that one would be on my desert island list of Walter recordings. Here there is a stronger contrast between fast and slow sections, a somewhat sharper pointing of instrumental details. Without supersede superseding the studio recording, the NBC one makes for a wonderful complement to it.

Prior to this performance of Mahler's First Symphony, New York's most prominent orchestra, the Philharmonic, where Mahler once served as music director, had played the work

on subscription concerts in three seasons: 1909–10 with Mahler conducting; 1920–21 under Mengelberg (a New Year's Eve performance was led by Joseph Stransky); and the 1923–24 season with Walter. There were also two summer performances under Willem van Hoogstraten during the Philharmonic's Stadium Concerts in 1926 and 1933. Mahler was still enough of a rarity, however, that it was admirable for NBC officials to allow Walter's programming of a full symphony (as opposed to the *Adagietto* of the Mahler Fifth, which was common in those days). I know of the almost legendary status of the conductor's 1961 stereo studio recording with the Columbia Symphony, but if I had to choose only one version to live with, it would be this 1939 reading.

I can imagine much going on in Walter's mind. This was the conclusion of his visit to the NBC Symphony; the future of his career was by no means a certainty; he and his family had suffered extraordinary indignities at the hands of the Nazis; and now he was going to perform a work by a composer the Third Reich had banned. Maybe I can be accused of reading too much into the occasion, but this stands as one of the great Mahler performances I have ever heard. All of the contrasting elements that are a part of Mahler's musical makeup—beauty, love of Nature, pain, earthiness, wit—are balanced perfectly. The heavier-than-usual application of *rubato* and *portamento*, particularly in the second and third movements, might well mirror the way Mengelberg would have conducted this music. The musicians respond to the challenges of what must have been unfamiliar music with passion as well as accuracy. This is a magnificent conclusion to a terrific set.

The usual attributes of Immortal Performance releases are all present. The booklet goes so far beyond what virtually any other company offers that comparisons are irrelevant. In addition to Altena's fine essay, there are wonderful photographs, helpful recording notes by producer Richard Caniell, and complete documentation of the sources. Most importantly, the sonic restoration is superb. There is nothing Immortal Performances can do about the dry acoustics of Studio 8H, but they have softened the edges as much as possible. The inclusion of the NBC announcements (which are, admittedly, a bit self-important) and applause, both abridged to accommodate each concert on a single generously-filled CD, adds to the atmosphere of what it must have been like to be sitting at home listening to music-making as superb as this.

Five stars: Valuable and exciting historic broadcasts lovingly restored

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Review by **Ken Meltzer**

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A marvelous, important new release from Immortal Performances presents a series of five weekly radio concerts with the NBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bruno Walter, broadcast between March 11 and April 8, 1939. These concerts took place during the most tumultuous period in Walter's life. Walter, of Jewish birth, converted to Christianity in the late 19th century. That, of course, was of no consequence to Hitler and the Nazis' race-based antisemitism. In 1933, Walter was forced to abandon his position as conductor of the Leipzig

Gewandhaus Orchestra. Walter made Vienna and Salzburg the main bases for his musical activities. But the 1938 *Anschluss* forced Walter to relocate once again, and he finally settled in the United States. A further tragedy took place in August of 1939 when Walter's daughter, Gretel, was murdered by her husband (jealous of her relationship with bass Ezio Pinza), who then committed suicide. I mention these facts for historical reasons, but also for musical considerations. In terms of recordings, Bruno Walter is best known for his extensive catalogue for Columbia Records (now, Sony Classical), and especially a series of stereo LPs he made in the final years of his life. They are treasurable recordings indeed, but they only tell a part of the story of Walter's achievements and artistry. The Columbia monophonic recordings made in the 1940s and 50s document a more intense and propulsive interpreter (Sony Classical's recent "Bruno Walter: The Complete Columbia Album Collection" offers numerous opportunities to compare Walter in the same repertoire at different stages of his life). To this we may add that Walter, like many conductors of his era, was generally an even more intense and engaged artist in live performance on the concert stage and in the opera house. That intensity is further accentuated in the live performances of the wartime years. Like his contemporary Wilhelm Furtwängler, Bruno Walter's concerts from that era often embody a life or death struggle not recaptured in the later interpretations (throughout the NBC SO concerts, you can hear Walter, time and time again, vocally exhorting the musicians to give their best). Again, this is not to say that the wartime recordings are necessarily superior to what Walter later achieved. But they are magnificent, unique documents, and essential for an understanding of Walter's conducting legacy.

At the time of these NBC SO concerts, Walter was 62, and at the height of his powers. The NBC SO, the orchestra RCA assembled in 1937 for Arturo Toscanini, following the Italian Maestro's departure from the New York Philharmonic, was a first-rate ensemble. Those factors alone would command attention to this IP set. But the concerts include numerous works Bruno Walter never recorded commercially. They include Mozart's Divertimento No. 15; Weber's *Oberon* Overture; Mason's *Suite after English Folk Songs*; Berlioz's *Corsaire* Overture, and the *Menuet des follets* and *March hongroise* from the French composer's *The Damnation of Faust*. Walter did make commercial recordings of the following works: Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 20 (Vienna Phiharmonic, EMI, 1937); Haydn's Symphony No. 92 (Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, EMI, 1938); Corelli's Concerto Grosso, op. 6, no. 8 (London Symphony Orchestra, EMI, 1938); Berlioz's *Ballet des sylphes* from *The Damnation of Faust* (Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Columbia, 1924) and *Symphonie fantastique* (Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, EMI, 1939); and Wagner's *A Faust Overture* (Berlin Staatskapelle, Polydor, 1923/4). However, their availability on CD is far more sporadic than the Columbia/Sony Classical recordings. While portions of these 1939 Walter-NBC SO concerts have been issued by labels specializing in historical performances, the IP set constitutes, to the best of my knowledge, the first time the entire series of concerts has been issued in its entirety.

March 11, 1939: The concert series opens with an all-Mozart program. The opening Divertimento in B-flat Major, K. 287 is abridged, probably for reasons of broadcast time limits. Three of the second movement's six variations are cut, as well as the first of the work's two

Minuets. The performance of what remains is graceful, lyrical, and when appropriate, energetic. Next, Walter is the soloist in the great D-minor Piano Concerto, K. 466. In 1937, Walter made a famous recording of the work with the Vienna Philharmonic. In both cases, Walter proves to be a fine pianist, one who embodies the qualities Mozart prized in his own keyboard performances; technical assurance, a pure singing tone and pristine legato, and imaginative, musical phrasing. The Vienna studio recording strikes me as adopting an air or melancholy and resignation, along with nostalgia in the beautiful second movement. The NBC broadcast offers a darker and more propulsive view. Whether the differences in the two performances reflect the contemporaneous states of Walter's life and emotions, I'll leave for others to contemplate. Both renditions are fine representations of the work, and different enough to warrant obtaining each. The concluding G-minor Symphony No. 40 was recorded twice by Walter for Columbia; in 1953 with the New York Philharmonic, and in 1959 with the Columbia Symphony Orchestra. The NBC SO concert performance more closely resembles the dark and intense 1953 NY Phil recording. But as in the case of the Piano Concerto No. 20, there is an increased intensity and urgency in the live rendition.

March 18, 1939: Weber's Overture to his opera *Oberon* begins the program. Walter fines an ideal balance between the music's romantic, heroic, and fairy-tale elements, and the NBC SO plays with tonal beauty and technical panache. In terms of Classical-era repertoire, Walter was most celebrated as a Mozart interpreter. But he was also a great advocate for Haydn's music. Walter's 1938 recording with the Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris of Haydn's "Oxford" Symphony, No. 92, is superb, one in which the conductor clearly views the composer as a predecessor to Beethoven and in turn, the Romantic movement. There is compelling fire and dash in the outer movements, and the second movement *Adagio cantabile* embodies both the expansive tempo and intense lyricism Haydn's tempo marking dictates. The fine NBC SO broadcast performance proceeds along similar lines, with just a bit more intensity in first and final movements. The program concludes with the Brahms First Symphony. Walter made two excellent studio recordings of the work for Columbia; with the NY Phil in 1953, and Columbia Symphony Orchestra in 1959. Again, the earlier studio recording is the more driven and intense of the two, although Walter never slights the work's more lyrical episodes. In the first three movements of the NBC SO 1939 broadcast, the performance adopts a similar approach to the 1953 studio recording. But in the finale, Walter and NBC SO play the music with a ferocious intensity that outstrips the NY Phil version. Here, it is hard to avoid hearing the performance as Walter's expression of his anger and frustration over the chaos overtaking the world, and in the final moments, his hope for a triumphant resolution. This is one of the most thrilling renditions of the finale of the Brahms 1 I have ever heard, the culmination of a marvelous performance.

March 25, 1939: Corelli's Concerto Grosso, op. 6, no. 8 receives an elegant performance from Walter and the NBC SO strings. As in the case of the 1947 NYPO recording of the Beethoven Symphony No. 1, Water views the early work as more of a premonition of the revolutionary path ahead than an homage to the Classical era of Haydn and Mozart. Tempos are generally brisk, complemented by crisp and emphatic articulation. Walter celebrates the humor

of the introductory measures of the work's finale, where the first violins furtively test the waters before diving into the principal *Allegro molto e vivace*. From there to the close, the performance is boisterous, celebratory, and beautifully executed. Contemporary American composer Daniel Mason's *Suite After English Folk Songs*, in five movements, offers attractive settings of the various melodies, coupled with some brash touches. Walter and the NBC SO play the work with enthusiasm and technical élan. The program concludes with Richard Strauss's tone poem *Death and Transfiguration*. Walter made one studio recording of the work, with the NY Phil in 1952. It's a superb and gripping rendition, one that gives full due to each of the work's principal episodes (the *Transfiguration* portion is more difficult to sustain, and can often bog down in sentimentality). Once again, the NBC SO version proves a worthy complement to the commercial recording, one that has the added thrill and electricity of a live performance. This is a rendition of breathtaking intensity, one that (as in the case of the Brahms 1 and Mahler 1) can be viewed as embodying the angst of the period, and prayers for the future.

April 1, 1939: The penultimate NBC SO 1939 concert is devoted to the music of Hector Berlioz, not a composer generally associated with Bruno Walter. And the leaden opening measures of the *Corsaire* Overture inspired some trepidation for me about what the concert would bring. But the performance soon gathers pace and stature, leading to a thrilling conclusion. The three excerpts from *The Damnation of Faust* are excellent from start to finish, embodying Berlioz's magical combination of elegance, acerbic humor, and in the *Marche hongroise*, thrilling bravado. The month following this concert, Walter made a superb studio recording of the *Symphonie fantastique* with the Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris. It's a treasurable document of a collaboration between a great conductor and orchestra who had been performing this seminal work for more than a century, including its 1830 premiere. The NBC SO performance does not duplicate (anticipate?) the elegance and transparency of the Paris Conservatoire recording. And it is a broader and more assertive performance than the Paris version. Nevertheless, the NBC SO rendition does not lack for style, tonal beauty, or an embrace of the Berlioz idiom. And as in the *Damnation of Faust* excerpts, Walter is attentive to the *fantastique*'s dark and dry humor. The hero's execution at the conclusion of the *March to the Scaffold*, and the belching demonic wind instruments in the *Dream of a Witches' Sabbath* are played to the hilt. This is a first-rate performance of the *Fantastic Symphony*, and one that is an important complement to the superb Paris studio recording.

April 8, 1939: The finale in the Walter-NBC SO 1939 concert series opens with a pair of works by Wagner. The early *A Faust Overture* receives a thrilling performance, giving full due to the work's brooding and propulsive elements. The ensuing *Siegfried Idyll*, played with the utmost lyricism and tenderness, offers the most profound contrast. The Mahler First Symphony concludes the program. At the time, the "Titan" was hardly the staple of the repertoire it is today. By way of example, a perusal of the Carnegie Hall Archives reveals that the most recent performances in that venue had been in October, 1933 with Walter conducting the NY Phil. But Walter's expertise in, and passionate advocacy of Mahler, coupled with the skill of the NBC SO musicians, coalesce for a performance of considerable stature. It's a performance that can still

hold its own with the plethora of superb renditions now available, including Water's two Columbia studio recordings. Walter elicits a masterful flexibility of phrasing and beautiful singing tone. And what a pleasure to hear the lovely string portamentos. In the remarkable third movement, Walter expertly shapes and paces the various episodes, beginning with the macabre "Frère Jacques" parody. The klezmer and "Die zwei blauen Augen" interludes, broadly paced, are tinged with a heartbreaking nostalgia. This sets the stage for the concluding movement. As in the case of the Brahms 1 finale and Strauss *Death and Transfiguration* performances, Walter accentuates to the fullest the contrast between the *sturm und drang* and triumphant elements. The result is a gripping performance that elicits an outpouring of appreciation from the studio audience.

IP's restorations of these treasurable concerts are quite fine. If they don't quite equal the commercial recordings of the era, they do have ample detail, color, and dynamic range. The sonics are more than sufficient to appreciate the greatness of Walter and the NBC SO's achievement. Generous portions of the broadcast announcements by hosts Gene Hamilton and Robert Woldoff are included. The superb liner notes are by my *Fanfare* colleague, James A. Altena, a Walter devotee, scholar, and co-author of the conductor's discography. James provides a detailed and absorbing description of the circumstances surrounding these concerts and the performances, along with comparisons to other Walter commercial recordings/live performances of the same repertoire. Richard Caniell's Recording Notes provide additional context. A glorious collection, essential for anyone interested in the legacy of Bruno Walter, one of the 20th century's podium giants. Highest recommendation.

Ken Meltzer

Five stars: The complete series of Bruno Walter's magical 1939 NBC SO concerts