

Listening in Detail



AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW
CREATED FOR
THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
BY MICHAEL M. CONE

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To be used for educational purposes

Listening in Detail

Tracks and clips:

1. Introduction

11:51

All clips are Philadelphia Orchestra performances.

- a. William Walton, *Façade, Hornpipe*, Vera Zorina, Eugene Ormandy (EO), Columbia MS-6449 recorded 2/19/1961.
- b. Sergey Rakhmaninov, *Symphonic Dances, Op. 45, II*, Charles Dutoit, London 433 181-2 recorded 11/12/1990.
- c. Johannes Brahms, *Hungarian Dance No. 5 in g, orch. Parlow*, Leopold Stokowski (LS), Philadelphia Orchestra private label (POpl) recorded 10/24/1917.
- d. Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky. *Nutcracker Suite, Op. 71a, Dance of the Flowers*, LS, Victor M-3 recorded 11/10/1926.
- e. Ottorino Respighi, *I Pini di Roma, I Pini della via Appia*, Riccardo Muti (RM), EMI CDC 7 47316 2 recorded 11/10/1984.
- f. Camille Saint-Saëns, *Symphony No. 3 in c, Op. 78, IV*, Christoph Eschenbach (CE), Ondine ODE 1094-5 recorded 5/10/2006.
- g. Johann Sebastian Bach, *Easter Oratorio, BWV 249, Sinfonia*, Temple University Choir, EO, Sony SBK 60261 recorded 4/17/1963.
- h. Gabriela Lena Frank, *Concerto Cusqueño*, Yannick Nézet-Séguin (YNS), Philadelphia Orchestra broadcast recording (PObr) 10/25/2012.
- i. Robert Schumann, *Symphony No. 3 in E♭, Op. 97, I*, Wolfgang Sawallisch (WS), POpl, recorded 1/23/2003.

2. The Sound of Brahms

8:25

All clips are by Johannes Brahms.

- a. *Symphony No. 4 in e, Op. 98, IV*, Philadelphia Orchestra (PO), YNS, Philadelphia Orchestra archives (POa), recorded 10/27/2012.
- b. *Ibid.*, PO, EO, Columbia ML-4017 recorded 11/19/1944.
- c. *Ein Deutsche Requiem, Op. 45, II*, EO, PO, Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Columbia M2S 686 recorded 5/20/1962.
- d. *Ibid.*, PO, Westminster Symphonic Choir, YNS, POa, recorded 11/4/2011.
- e. *Ibid.*, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Philharmonic Choir, YNS, London Philharmonic private label LPO-0045 recorded 4/4/2009.

- f. *Ibid.*, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Philharmonic Choir, Klaus Tennstedt, EMI 7243 5 69518 2 2 recorded 8/1984.

3. The Sound of Tchaikovsky

16:52

All clips are performances of Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky, *Symphony No. 6 in b, Op. 74*. They are by The Philadelphia Orchestra unless otherwise specified.

- a. *II*, EO, RCA Victor DM-337 recorded 12/13/1936.
- b. *II*, EO, Columbia MS-6160 recorded 3/10/1960.
- c. *II*, RM, Seraphim 7243 5 73432 2 0 recorded 11/3/1989.
- d. *II*, Philharmonia Orchestra, RM, EMI 50999 0 97999 2 9 recorded 11/14/1979.
- e. *I*, EO, RCA R204808 recorded 5/27/1968.
- f. *IV*, EO, Columbia ML-4544 (blue label) recorded 4/6/1952.
- g. *Ibid.*, but *III*.
- h. *III*, WS, POa, recorded 10/5/2002.
- i, j. Columbia ML-4544 (blue label) *op. cit.*, but *I*.
- k. *I*, Israel Philharmonic, Kurt Masur, Helicon HELO29633 released 2011.
- l. *I*, Kurt Masur, POa, recorded 5/6/2001.
- m. *I*, Rotterdam Philharmonic, YNS, Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft (DGG) 00289 479 0835 recorded 8/2012.*
- n. *I*, YNS, POa, recorded 12/12/2008.

4. The Sound of Stravinsky

15:13

All clips are Philadelphia Orchestra performances of Igor Stravinsky, *Le sacre du printemps*. The conductor is specified.

- a. LS, Victor AM-74 recorded 9/24/1929.
- b-i. YNS, DGG B0019032-02 recorded 3/1/2013.
- j. Composite clip containing 4a; EO, Columbia ML-5030 recorded 4/24/1955; RM, Angel AM-34708 recorded 10/25/1978; CE, POpl, recorded 9/2007; and 4b.

5. The Sound of Bruckner

20:16

Except for 5c, all clips are symphonies of Anton Bruckner, and, unless otherwise identified, they are Philadelphia Orchestra performances.

- a. *No. 8 in c, I*, Klaus Tennstedt, PObr 4/8/1977.
- b. *No. 3 in d, I*, WS, POpl, recorded 10/3/2002.*

- c. Johannes Brahms, *Variations & Fugue on a Theme by G. F. Handel, Op. 24*, Julius Katchen, London STS 15551 recorded 6/28/1962.
- d-i. *No. 5 in B♭*, WS, POpl recorded 1/8/2004.*
- j. *No. 8 in c, IV*, Orchestre Métropolitain du Grand Montréal (OMGM), YNS, ATMA ACD2 2513 recorded 6/21/2009.
- k. *Ibid.*, but I.
- l. *No. 8 in c, IV*, Klaus Tennstedt *op. cit.*
- m. *No. 9 in d, II*, Bruno Walter, PObr 2/28/1948.
- n. *Ibid.*, but YNS, recorded 5/2/2014.
- o. *Ibid.*, but OMGM, YNS, ATMA SACD2 2514 recorded 9/21/2007.

6. Conclusion

4:00

- a. Anton Bruckner, *Symphony No. 9 in d, I*, YNS, PO, recorded 5/2/2014.

* These recordings are available as paid downloads from HDTracks.com.

Thanks, Bibliography & Comments

Lynette Zimmerman had the idea of bringing my earlier CD, *Just listen to it!*, up to date. I had learned a great deal since I did the research for that disc and agreed that it was a good idea. Furthermore, I thought that it would provide a nice close to a disc that had been suggested by Jeanette Neubauer: one that would teach how to listen to orchestral music, a brief primer on rhythm, harmony, counterpoint and timbre. What I did not realize was that my reach exceeded my grasp. So much material could not possibly be encompassed in one disc. I didn't think that anyone would listen to a two disc set, so the interdependency had to be removed: they each needed to stand alone. The making of two interrelated but independent discs proved to be a nightmare. My review board, Stacy Dutton, Al Lesitsky and Stan Scordilis helped me through it. It

literally would never have happened without them — or else the result would only have been able to be borne by the tiniest fraction of the audience. To whatever extent the latter is true, it's due to my shortcomings; to whatever extent I have succeeded in making something more universal, it's due to their freely offered help. Jeffrey Friedman was also of invaluable assistance in several ways, not the least by providing a musical perspective. Richard Woodhams gave me such a good definition of the Philadelphia sound several years ago that I now use it routinely, too often, as herein, without attribution. Connie must have been sick of listening to comparisons, but remained of such good cheer that she was able to provide the wonderful graphics that accompany the product and help to link this disc and *Listening Up Close*, the other half of the nearly conjoined twins. Finally, I am eternally grateful to The Philadelphia Orchestra for its archive material; but my gratitude will extend beyond eternity — if that's possible — to Charles Gagnon, the Orchestra's recording engineer: he did the heavy lifting.

The Manchester Guardian of June 13, 1923 has a brief but wonderful review of Walton's *Façade*. Len Mullenger's article on musicwebinternational.com gave details on the Sengerphone. My copy of the *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Stanley Sadie, ed., MacMillan, London, 1980) is getting thumbed to death and my computer now automatically goes to wikipedia.org. imslp.org is an invaluable resource for anyone needing scores of public domain material and I had extensive reference to the Boosey & Hawkes miniature score of Stravinsky's *Le sacre du printemps*, which has been on my shelf since college. Robert Chase, *Dies Irae, A Guide to Requiem Music* (The Scarecrow Press, Lanham, MD, 2003) helped fill me in on German requiems. Richard Taruskin's study, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, is magisterial. The University of California Press did us all a great service by bringing this to the public. If you're interested in Stravinsky, you need it. There were numerous other references that provided minor points but one last major help needs to be cited. I am not sure that when I was his student I realized that E. T. Cone would change my life. He did. His pedagogy and encouragement surface here in many ways, not least in his article *Stravinsky, the Progress of a Method*.

This all started in an essay I wrote, *Musical Performance & The Philadelphia Sound*. It began by comparing four performances of Chopin's *Prelude in C-Major*: Alfred

Cortot, Guiomar Novaes, Ruth Slenczynska and Benno Moisewitsch. I went on to trace the historical development and continuity of the sound of The Philadelphia Orchestra. I then turned that work into something more accessible in *Just listen to it!*, but realized that there was utility in backing up a bit and coaching listeners on the apprehension — the perception, if you prefer — of nuance in orchestral music. That was the train of thought that led me to jump at Lynette's suggestion and produce these two CDs. One cannot tell one orchestra from another except by seeking nuance. Of course, that's true of major, professional ensembles. It's easy to tell the difference between a community orchestra and a major symphony orchestra; but catching the difference between The Philadelphia Orchestra and the Philharmonia Orchestra is not easy. They're compared a bit on this disc and also on *Just listen to it!* Going back and listening again may help you, if you didn't hear it the first time. Hence the stress on the details, because that's where the answer lies.

The disturbing part of the research is the isolation of the sound of an orchestra from the interpretation of the conductor, or even the science of the recording engineer. It seems to matter very little who made the recording or where. These discs have Philadelphia Orchestra recordings made in Verizon Hall, the Academy of Music, the Broadwood Hotel, Town Hall Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Masonic Temple and the "Old Met" in Philadelphia, but they're all recognizably Philadelphia Orchestra. The composite *Le sacre* should banish any doubts about continuity having to do with the nature of the recording. The Stokowski and Ormandy recordings were made in the Academy of Music; the Muti in Philadelphia's "Old Met" (858 N. Broad) and the Eschenbach and Nézet-Séguin recordings in Verizon Hall. Probably, the recording engineer for the Stokowski was Harry Sooy and for the Ormandy Fred Plaut. The record jacket identifies Michael Gray as the engineer for Muti's. The Eschenbach and Nézet-Séguin ones were engineered by the wonderful Charles Gagnon. All the recordings except Eschenbach's were studio recordings, it was live. The Stokowski came from 78's, the Ormandy from a monaural LP, the Muti is available as a CD or an LP; I used the LP, it should have better fidelity. The Eschenbach and Nézet-Séguin ones are on CD. Nézet-Séguin's is also available as a 96/24 (look it up if you don't know what that means) download from HDTracks.com, but I don't have it. You sift through all that and still tell me that they don't sound like the same ensemble. I won't believe you!

I should add a technical note. Many of these recordings have been reissued, but the second and later releases are often remastered. From my point of view, and for authenticity of sound, remastering adds nothing and takes away a great deal. I try to get the earliest possible version of a recording: LPs before CDs, 78s before LPs. My LPs are played on a B&O tangential drive Beogram 5500 turntable with a B&O MMC2 cartridge that then feeds a SoundSmith MMP3 RIAA equalizing preamplifier. 78s are done with Rega 78-2 cartridge on a Rega RP78 turntable. For 78s I use a Techlink PA928 non-equalizing preamplifier — equalization is done numerically at the time of mastering for 78s, usually after noise removal. In either case, the preamps feed a Benchmark ADC1-USB, its 96/24 USB output goes directly into an Apple Macintosh computer (I use several) and is recorded with Audacity. The proprietary Audacity file is converted to AIFFs and then processed through Brian Davies's suite of noise removal tools. Preferring noisy to scrubbed, I try to remove as little as possible. Finally, the AIFFs are taken back up into Audacity for tracking and labeling before being exported as FLAC files. All the mastering on the final CDs is done at the highest possible resolution, up to 96/24, until final export as a 44.1/16 file for the CD.

I'd love to have your thoughts because feedback is essential to good educational materials. If you can't come see me at seat K-101 during a Thursday performance, you can contact me through the Philadelphia Orchestra. Please do so!

Lynette may have made the suggestion; Stacy, Stan, Al, Connie, Jeffrey, and Charles were all essential; but nothing would have happened without the musicians of The Philadelphia Orchestra. I am dependent on them in every way, not just for frequent fixes of their addicting sound. I only hope they will see fit to accept my thanks.

Mike Cone

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1. Introduction	11:51
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