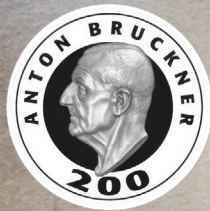


SOMM
RECORDINGS



Premiere
Releases



BRUCKNER

From the Archives Volume 3

BRUCKNER

From the Archives Volume 3

In acknowledgment of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Anton Bruckner in 1824, SOMM Recordings – with the support of the Bruckner Society of America – is releasing archival recordings of all 11 Bruckner symphonies and other selected works, many of which are appearing for the first time in any form.

This six-volume *Bruckner from the Archives* series was conceived and designed by SOMM Executive Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer Lani Spahr.

In addition, it will contain authoritative notes written by Benjamin M. Korstvedt, Jeppson Professor of Music at Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, President of the Bruckner Society of America, and member of the Editorial Board of the *New Anton Bruckner Complete Edition*, which will trace Bruckner's life and compositional development from the Symphony in F minor of 1863 through to the unfinished Ninth Symphony of 1894 from the perspective of current Bruckner research.

Releases will be issued throughout the anniversary year of 2024 in six volumes of 2 CDs each. The source for these recordings is the monumental Archive of John F. Berky, Executive Secretary of the Bruckner Society of America, which contains over 11,000 recorded Bruckner performances. He has graciously given SOMM access to his Archive and acted as Series Consultant in the design of this historic release.

Lani Spahr

The Bruckner Society of America

The Bruckner Society of America, founded in 1931, is proud to sponsor this series. The Society pursues its mission of promoting better understanding and greater appreciation of Bruckner's music by supporting worthy recordings, performances, events, and publications, as well as through its official publication, *The Bruckner Journal*. More information may be found at brucknersocietyamerica.org



The Initial Breakthroughs:

The Third and Fourth Symphonies

The **Third Symphony in D minor** was one of the works, along with the Fourth and Seventh, that made Bruckner's name as a symphonist in the 1880s and early 1890s. During Bruckner's lifetime it was performed more than 20 times in cities as far-flung as New York, London, Paris, Amsterdam, Utrecht, Berlin, Dresden, Munich, and Prague, as well as in Salzburg, Graz, Linz and three times in Vienna. This success was truly hard won. Bruckner's earliest sketches for the Third were made in late 1872, shortly after he completed the Second. He completed the composition in August of the following year, in Marienbad, where he had gone for a stay, in part to escape a cholera outbreak in Vienna. From there he travelled to Bayreuth, bringing the scores of both the Second and the Third with the intention of offering to dedicate one of them to Wagner. As Bruckner recounted many years later in an 1891 letter to Hans von Wolzogen, it was only after Wagner had taken time to peruse both scores quite carefully that he declared his preference for the Third – the one in which “the trumpet states the theme” – as a “highly significant” new work and accepted the dedication “with enormous pleasure”. From then on, Bruckner called it his Wagner Symphony.

After returning to Vienna, Bruckner made final revisions to the score and had an elegant presentation copy prepared, which he sent in May 1874 to Wagner in Bayreuth with a florid dedication to “Herr Richard Wagner, the incomparable, world-famous and sublime master of poetry and musical art, in deepest reverence”. Soon, however – much as he would with the Fourth a year later – Bruckner began to rework the Third. Between late 1874 and late 1876 he made a series of “improvements”, as he termed them, which involved adjustments to the orchestration, musical texture, phrase structure, and aspects of form. This process of revision culminated in the creation of the full score of a new version completed in 1877.

During this time Bruckner began his search for a performance of his newest symphony. In the Fall of 1875 and again on 27 September 1877 the Third was run through by the Vienna Philharmonic – as the “Nullte” and the Second had been in previous years – in a *Novitätenprobe*, a session at which the orchestra tried out new works to decide which, if any, would be accepted for performance. In 1875 the Third was bluntly passed over, and in 1877 again the musicians voted to turn it down. But this time Johann Herbeck, a man of great influence in the Viennese music world and an ally of Bruckner, intervened and arranged to lead the symphony's first performance himself with the *Gesellschafts-Orchester*, a group he directed that included a substantial portion of the membership of the Philharmonic. The concert was set for 16 December.

Tragically, however, Herbeck died unexpectedly on 28 October. The performance of the Third was not cancelled. Instead, Bruckner conducted it himself, as he had the previous performances of his First and Second Symphonies. This performance was nothing like the success Bruckner had hoped for. It came at the very end of a long concert, following Beethoven's Egmont Overture, a Spohr Violin Concerto, two arias and Beethoven's *Meeresstille und Glückliche Fahrt*, all conducted by Joseph Hellmesberger. Bruckner's new symphony found little approval from most of the musicians and most of the audience – and none with the leading music critics. Bruckner's hopes for a breakthrough success were dashed.

Yet a small group of young musicians eager to embrace musical innovation responded to the performance with real enthusiasm. Notable among them were several who would play important roles in the history of the Third, including Josef Schalk, a teenaged Gustav Mahler, and the music publisher Theodor Rättig, who offered to publish the score. In 1879, Rättig did in fact publish the full score along with an arrangement of the work for piano four-hands that Mahler had prepared with some help from his friend Rudolf Krzyzanowski. Thus, the Third became the first of Bruckner's symphonies to be published and thus to begin to make its way into the musical world.

It may seem surprising, then, that in the late 1880s Bruckner again took up the Third and prepared a new version, which notably reshaped the second half of the Finale, before it appeared in a new printing by Rättig, and before its second Viennese performance on 21 December 1890 – this time by the Vienna Philharmonic led by Hans Richter. The response to this performance was entirely unlike it had been in 1877. The symphony was received with such great enthusiasm that the Philharmonic and Richter gave a second performance, sponsored by the Vienna Academic Wagner-Verein, hardly a month later, on 25 January 1891.

The reasons for Bruckner's decision to revise a work that had already been published and performed with some success have been subject to much speculation. Some observers regard it simply as a bad decision by Bruckner and feel that the assistance and advice the composer sought from his former student Franz Schalk somehow diminish or even invalidate the new version. The more zealous of them declare the new revision a "mutilation". Other observers, however, consider the evolution of Bruckner's conception of the role of the Finale, the experience he had gained through the composition and performance of the Fourth and Seventh in the intervening decade, and his relentless drive to perfect his works as fully valid reasons for Bruckner's creation of a new version. Bruckner himself was in no doubt about the wisdom of his decision. In 1893 he emphasized to Hermann Levi that he must perform only the new version of the Third, which he regarded as "incomparably better", adding "I don't want to hear anything more about

the previous version". Bruckner obviously regarded the history of the Third as a process of improvement that lasted from 1875 until 1890.

Thomas Leibnitz, who investigated this entire problematic area in great depth in his study *The Brothers Schalk and Anton Bruckner*, recognizes that Bruckner's methods of revision, which undeniably did involve collaboration in their later stages, do not fit with "the image of the self-confident, intuitive genius." Yet, he continues, "by abandoning a narrow standard of evaluation, for which every 'encroachment' on creative autonomy in the form of advice and discussion represents a diminishment of value," Bruckner's methods can be understood quite reasonably by recognizing that he "sought and needed dialogue, confirmation, and interaction with the opinion of others, whether in relationship to the musical public or a circle of advisors" and by accepting that "the initiative for advice and discussion came from Bruckner himself"¹. Furthermore, as affirmed by Friedrich Eckstein, who knew Bruckner personally very well, if advice from others "found its way in to the long-accepted printed scores, that means that Bruckner accepted it, and accepted it freely – because I can confirm that it was impossible to coerce him in artistic matters"².

Musically the Third represents a distinctly new phase in Bruckner's work. The *misterioso* opening, with the trumpet theme that so impressed Wagner appearing against a dynamic sound tapestry provided by the strings, sets the stage to great effect. Bruckner treats the trumpet theme as the work's central thematic symbol. It returns throughout the first movement in many varied guises and settings and, in what was to become a hallmark of Bruckner's symphonic vocabulary, it returns in a grandly triumphant fashion at the end of the piece in full major-key glory to crown the Finale. Also new in this movement is the restatement of the opening theme as a massive unison proclaimed by the entire orchestra. The "Bruckner rhythm", with its alteration of duple and triple division of the beat, first heard in the Second permeates the expansive second theme group.

The slow movement – in the remote key of E flat major – is the first of Bruckner's great Adagios. The opening is an extraordinary display of Bruckner's harmonic mastery that encompasses subtle tonal wandering and soulful dissonance with remarkable ease and to unforgettable expressive effect. Throughout its course, this movement, like so many Adagios to come, traverses a series of greatly contrasting moods. The resulting impression is almost visionary. The Scherzo is a rhythmic dynamo

1 Thomas Leibnitz, *Die Brüder Schalk und Anton Bruckner, dargestellt an den Nachlassbeständen der Musiksammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek* (Tutzing, 1988), pp. 271–273.

2 Friedrich Eckstein, quoted in "Leidenschaftliche Erörterungen um Bruckner", *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 18 (1936), p.48.

much like its predecessors, while in the Trio we experience an earthy Austrian dance. The Finale begins with enormous energy as the brass call out a massive theme that starts with a tremendous dissonant downward leap. Yet the turbulence recedes surprisingly quickly and suddenly the scene changes completely. In the remote key of F-sharp the strings begin to play a polka, behind which the brass section intones a somber chorale. The effect is striking, as is the symbolism. Bruckner later related the effect of this passage to what he felt one night when he walked past the Sühnhaus (House of Atonement), where a dead man lay in his coffin, while the sounds of music and merriment from a ball could be heard from a neighboring building: "That is what I wanted to show in the last movement of my Third Symphony: the polka means the fun and joy of the world and the chorale the sadness and pain of life." This music unfolds at length before it is followed by one of Bruckner's most remarkable third theme groups, which is marked by a heavily syncopated accompaniment pattern in the strings and powerfully declarative writing for the brass section.

The recording in this series is by Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt (1900–1973) conducting the Northwest German Radio Symphony Orchestra (NDR SO). After the end of the Second World War, after an active career during the Nazi years, Schmidt-Isserstedt was tasked by the British occupying authorities with organizing and directing this newly founded orchestra based in Hamburg. He was to remain its music director for 26 years, until 1971. The orchestra quickly established itself as one of the best in Germany. Schmidt-Isserstedt and his orchestra gave the first performances of the edition of the Third prepared by Fritz Oeser shortly after it was published in 1950. Since the Third was not included in the first Collected Works edition, this was the first modern edition of the symphony. It is based closely on the score Bruckner published in 1879, which is essentially the version of the symphony performed in December 1877. The present recording was made in 1966 with the NDR SO, again in Oeser's edition.

Bruckner's next symphony, the **Fourth Symphony in E flat major**, has long been one of his most successful and beloved works – and for good reason. It is a magnificent symphony, filled with lyrical themes, expressive contrasts, splendid orchestration, glorious climaxes, and dramatic developments. The music communicates very directly to listeners – but very differently than the Third. In fact, as Bruckner emphasized, he planned the Fourth to be an accessible and "popular" symphony. It can hardly be a coincidence that this is the only symphony for which he supplied a title, the "Romantic" Symphony.

Its music does often evoke the mode of romanticism that finds deep mystery, power, and profound meaning in nature. The opening of the symphony immediately sets the tone as lonely horn calls echo

across a mellow sonic carpet before the music gradually builds into a great surge of musical energy. A rustic spirit suffuses the second theme, which features a bright motif (two staccato eighth notes and a leap down a sixth) that Bruckner often said was based on the song of a common European songbird called *Kohlmeise* in German and known in Britain as the great tit (its scientific name is *Parus major* and it looks rather like a yellow-tinted version of the American chickadee). Even more telling of the work's mood may be Bruckner's statement to Theodor Helm that with the viola's countermelody to this motive he wanted to express a "personal feeling of happiness at being able to listen to such intimate natural voices in the forest". At times in the outer movements powerfully stormy passages break out with a violence that conjures some of nature's most turbulent forces. The ringing, echoing horns of the Scherzo clearly suggest the hunt, and Bruckner even described the gentle Trio in the middle of this movement as a "dance tune" that accompanies the hunters' midday repast. The Finale also contains music that captures the spirit of Austrian dances, as well as some darkly romantic episodes, before culminating in one of Bruckner's greatest codas.

As the symphony began to make its way into the public sphere, Bruckner made some other descriptive comments about the work's imagery. These were directed largely to potential conductors or music critics, which suggests that he hoped to align the symphony with the musical tendencies associated with program music in the hope of facilitating its acceptance. In a manuscript score he prepared for an early performance, for example, he labelled the lovely, leisurely song sung by the violas in the second movement "a serenade." Several times he suggested that the very opening of the symphony depicts sunrise in a medieval town, the morning trumpet call (*Morgenweckruf*), and a group of knights on noble steeds sallying out into the enveloping "magic of nature". These comments have the distinct feel of after-the-fact description that did not play an essential role in his musical conception. Indeed, with a few possible exceptions such as the third movement Trio, the music of the Fourth is not that of a program symphony à la Berlioz but rather the work appears to be "more an expression of feeling than tone painting," as Beethoven famously said of his Pastoral Symphony.

As is very well known, Bruckner revised most of his symphonies, a few of them – including the Fourth – more than once. Making sense of the multiple versions of Bruckner's symphonies is often perplexing. This is certainly the case with the Fourth, which underwent the longest, most complex process of composition and revision of all the symphonies. For this reason, it provides a good opportunity to consider the nature and logic of Bruckner's approach to revision. He began composing the first version of the Fourth at the start of 1874, almost immediately after finishing the Third, and completed the full score by the end of that year. In both 1875 and 1876 he made modest adjustments to the texture, orchestration, and musical syntax of numerous passages. In 1876, during his trip to Bayreuth for the first

performance of Wagner's *Ring* cycle, Bruckner's hopes were raised that the Fourth might be premiered in Berlin by the conductor Benjamin Bilse, but those plans came to nothing.

In the autumn of 1877, after reviewing the score closely, Bruckner decided that the Fourth "urgently needed fundamental revision", and by the end of 1878 he had recomposed it quite radically. The new version that had emerged incorporated substantial changes to the first two movements, while the Finale was thoroughly reworked and emerged as a somewhat lighter, more concise movement that he dubbed "Volksfest" or "Folk Festival". Bruckner also replaced the Scherzo he had composed in 1874 with a wholly new movement, the well-known "Hunt" Scherzo. Yet soon Bruckner again became unsatisfied with the "Volksfest" Finale; in late 1879 he began to compose a largely new version, which is weightier, grander, and more epic in tone. By the summer of 1880, the Fourth had largely achieved the form in which it is now best known, aside from some final adjustments to the Finale made for the first performances.

As with the earlier symphonies Bruckner had composed in Vienna, the Fourth was given a hearing at one of the Philharmonic's *Novitätenproben* in October 1880. The members of the orchestra once again voted against the symphony, this time because of its supposed "hyperromanticism". But, as Hans Richter, the conductor of the Philharmonic concerts, explained, he personally made the decision to perform the Fourth in concert. Richter soon led the Philharmonic in the premiere on 20 February 1881 as part of a special concert sponsored by the Vienna Wagner-Verein in the Musikverein. The performance – which was the first time one of Bruckner's symphonies was conducted by someone other than the composer himself – was received with great enthusiasm by the audience, yet only one complete and one partial performance followed over the next seven years. In the mid-1880s Bruckner made several attempts to find a publisher for the Fourth, yet these were unsuccessful. As a result, this version only appeared in print some four decades after his death in a modern edition by Haas, which soon became the standard version of the symphony in concert and on record. (The recording included in this series is based on this version).

Much as he had with the Third, Bruckner reworked the Fourth one last time in 1887 and 1888, this time with the advice and assistance of a much younger musician, Ferdinand Löwe. This version was given its inaugural performance on 22 January 1888, again by the Vienna Philharmonic under Richter. The Fourth finally appeared in print in 1890, and soon achieved real success, starting with a triumphant performance in Munich under Franz Fischer on 10 December 1890 (deputizing for the indisposed Hermann Levi). A dozen performances followed over the next five years in Hamburg, Berlin, Dresden, Brno, Nuremberg, Graz, and twice again in Vienna. These established its reputation as one of the composer's finest works.

Despite its success, this version is now far less well known and well regarded than its predecessors. Starting in the 1930s it was aggressively discredited as an unauthorized bowdlerization and pointedly excluded from the official Collected Works Edition. Consequently, this version was largely neglected for decades – and often brusquely scorned as corrupt or “inauthentic”. Nevertheless, more recent scholarly research revealed that Bruckner himself actively revised the symphony in 1887 and 1888, oversaw the rehearsals for the performance in January 1888, revised the text for the last time after this concert, and authorized its publication. As a result, in 2004 the 1888 version was finally published in the Collected Works Edition.

Bruckner’s extensive revisions and reworking of the Fourth, and indeed of many of his works, have often been misunderstood. They are certainly not the work of a neurotically indecisive or helplessly compulsive man, nor are they the result of coercion, external pressure, or any sort of editorial skullduggery. Above all, his revisions were motivated by his persistent drive to perfect his musical work. Indeed, the careful study of the compositional development of the Fourth reveals that over a span of 15 years Bruckner revised, reworked, and refined this symphony to reflect what he learned from early performances and his deepening experience as a symphonist. The composer left telling indications about what he sought to achieve as he perfected the Fourth. Not only did he wish for this to be an “easily grasped” symphony but, as he emphasized on one occasion, he wanted to ensure that the symphony would be able to “make its effect”. He surely succeeded in that, as innumerable performances across generations have powerfully demonstrated.

The recording in this series is led by the Swiss conductor and composer Volkmar Andreae (1879–1962). He may not be widely remembered today, but he was a leading advocate for Bruckner in the first half of the last century. Andreae was the music director of the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra from 1906 until 1949. With them he led the Swiss premieres of the Fourth and Ninth Symphonies, and within a few years of his appointment in Zurich he had performed each of the nine symphonies. By the end of his career, he had led more than 250 Bruckner performances. Among his most notable achievements were organizing the first Bruckner festival in Switzerland in 1936 and leading the Vienna Symphony in a complete cycle of the symphonies and the *Te Deum* in January and February 1953 that was broadcast by Austrian Radio. The present recording, from 1958 with the Munich Philharmonic, offers an excellent example of Andreae’s style in Bruckner. It is characterful, at times fiery and passionate, at others deeply expressive, but always keenly alive to the richly varied content and moods of the music.

Benjamin Korstvedt © 2024



JOHN F. BERKY has spent much of his career in broadcasting. He served as the Music Director of the Broadcasting Foundation of America and produced concert broadcasts for National Public Radio, WGBH Boston, the Finnish Broadcasting Company and the United States Coast Guard Band. He served as Director of Radio at Connecticut Public Broadcasting for 18 years. In his retirement, he has maintained the website **abruckner.com** and the Bruckner Archive which holds over 11,000 Bruckner recordings, books, scores, prints, and other memorabilia.



BENJAMIN M. KORSTVEDT is the George N. and Selma U. Jeppson Professor of Music at Clark University and President of the Bruckner Society of America. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the *New Anton Bruckner Complete Edition*.

The first volume of his three-volume critical edition of Bruckner's Fourth Symphony was awarded the 2020 Claude V. Palisca Award by the American Musicological Society, with the second volume due to appear in 2024. His editions of the Fourth Symphony have been performed and recorded by leading orchestras worldwide, including those in Vienna, Berlin, Amsterdam, Cleveland, Boston, Chicago, Minnesota, and Tokyo.

He has published widely on topics related to Bruckner, Mahler, symphonic aesthetics, compositional process, music criticism, and musical culture in late-19th-century Vienna, inter-war Austria, and during the Nazi era. His most recent book is *Bruckner's Fourth: The Biography of a Symphony* (Oxford University Press, 2024).



LANI SPAHR – audio restoration engineer, producer and annotator – has garnered critical praise from *Gramophone* (“There are historic releases that make the grade because they are just that – ‘historic’ – and there are releases that make history because they are musically overwhelming. This set is both.”), BBC Radio 3, *BBC Music Magazine*, *Fanfare*, *The Sunday Times*, MusicWeb International, *Diapason*, *Classical Source*, *International Record Review*, and many others.

In 2016, BBC Radio 3 presented an hour-long documentary about his stereo reconstructions for Elgar Remastered (SOMMCD 261-4). His work can be heard on SOMM Recordings, Music & Arts, West Hill Radio Archive, Naxos, Boston Records, and Oboe Classics, and he has worked for Sony/France on historic restorations of the recordings of George Szell. In 2020, he was awarded an Honorary

Membership of the Elgar Society for his work on the recorded legacy of Sir Edward Elgar.

Formerly a leading performer on period oboes in the US, he was a member of Boston Baroque and the Handel and Haydn Society Orchestra of Boston. In addition, he has appeared with many of North America’s leading period instrument orchestras, including Tafelmusik, Philharmonia Baroque, Tempesta di Mare, Apollo’s Fire, Washington Bach Consort, the American Classical Orchestra, Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, Mercury Baroque, and many others.

Also a modern oboist, he was the principal oboist of the Colorado Springs Symphony Orchestra, the Colorado Opera Festival, the American Chamber Winds, and the Maine Chamber Ensemble and made his European solo debut in 1999 playing John McCabe’s Oboe Concerto with the Hitchin Symphony Orchestra in England.

He has served on the faculties of Colorado College, Phillips Exeter Academy (New Hampshire), and the University of New Hampshire Chamber Music Institute. He has toured throughout North America, Europe, and the Far East on period and modern oboes and has recorded for Telarc, Linn, Koch, Naxos, Vox, MusicMasters, L’Oiseau-Lyre, and Musica Omnia.

ARIADNE 5029-2

AAD



First Releases

Anton Bruckner (1824–96)

^a NDR Symphony Orchestra, Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt *conductor*

^b Munich Philharmonic, Volkmar Andreae *conductor*



CD 1

Symphony No.3 in D minor WAB 103 (1878, Oeser Edition)^a

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| ① | Gemäßigt, mehr bewegt, misterioso | 21:19 |
| ② | Adagio: Bewegt, quasi allegretto | 15:02 |
| ③ | Scherzo: Ziemlich schnell | 7:11 |
| ④ | Finale: Allegro | 14:17 |
| | Total duration: | 57:49 |

CD 2

Symphony No.4 in E flat major WAB 104 "Romantic" (1878/80, Haas Edition)^b

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| ① | Bewegt, nicht zu schnell | 16:38 |
| ② | Andante, quasi allegretto | 14:21 |
| ③ | Scherzo: Bewegt | 10:12 |
| ④ | Finale: Bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell | 18:16 |
| | Total duration: | 59:28 |

^a Recording (LIVE): Musikhalle Hamburg, 12 December 1966 (NDR aircheck)

^b Recording (LIVE): Herkulesaal, Munich, 16 January 1958
(Bayerischer Rundfunk aircheck)

Executive Producers: **Lani Spahr** and **Siva Oke**

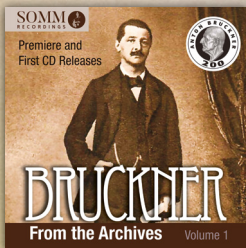
Co-Producers: **Bruckner Society of America**

Series Consultant: **John F. Berky**

All recordings newly restored and remastered by Lani Spahr

Design: **WLP London Ltd** · Editorial: **Ray Granlund**

**More from the BRUCKNER Archives,
remastered by Lani Spahr
on SOMM Recordings:**



ARIADNE 5025-2 (2 CD)

Bruckner from the Archives Vol.1

Symphony in F minor *Bruckner Orchestra, Linz / Kurt Wöss*

March in D minor · 3 Pieces for Orchestra

Vienna Symphony Orchestra / Hans Weisbach

Psalm 112 *Vienna Akademie Kammerchor, VSO / Henry Swoboda*

Overture in G minor *WDR Symphony Orchestra, Köln / Dean Dixon*

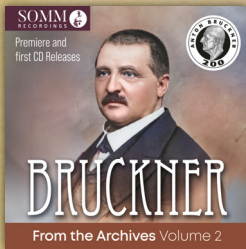
Symphony No.1 in C minor

Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra / Eugen Jochum

String Quartet *Koeckert Quartet*



GRAMOPHONE
Editor's choice



ARIADNE 5027-2 (2 CD)

Bruckner from the Archives Vol.2

Mass No.2 in E minor

Choir of St Hedwig's Cathedral, Berlin, Berlin Philharmonic / Karl Forster

Symphony in D minor "Die Nullte"

Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam / Eduard van Beinum

Symphony No.2 in C minor

Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra / Georg Ludwig Jochum