## Great Conductors of The 20th Century Vol.33 - George Szell

Disc: 1 *1. Auber - Fra Diavolo: Overture* Dvorák - Symphony No.8 *2. I. Allegro Con Brio 3. II. Adagio 4. III. Allegretto Grazioso - Molto Vivace 5. IV. Allegro Ma Non Troppo*
Debussy: La Mer
*6. De L'aube A Midi Sur La Mer: Les Trent 7. II. Jeux De Vagues: Allegro 8. III. Dialogue Du Vent Et De La Mer: Anime Et Tumultueux 9. Delius – Irmelin: Prelude*
Cleveland Orchestra (1-5, 9) WDR Symphonieorchester Köln (6-8) Disc: 2
*1. Rossini - L'Italiana In Algeri: Overture*
Tchaikovsky: Symphony No.5
*2. I. Andante - Allegro Con Anima 3. II. Andante Cantabile, Con Alcuna Licenza - Moderato Con Anima - Andante Mosso - Allegro Non Troppo - Tempo I 4. III. Valse. Allegro Moderato 5. IV. Finale. Andante Maestoso - Allegro Vivace - Molto Vivace - Moderato Assai E Molto Maestoso - Presto 6. Wagner: Overture 'Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg' 7. Josef Strauss - Walzer 'Delirious Waltz'*
Cleveland Orchestra (1, 7) WDR Symphonieorchester Köln (2-5) New York Philharmonic; Carnegie Hall (6)

Born in Budapest in 1897, George Szell showed a prodigious musical talent. He made his debut as a pianist at the age of 10 with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra and at 17 appeared with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra as both composer and pianist. He was then taken under the wing of Richard Strauss, working as his assistant at the Royal Opera in Berlin (1915-17). Subsequently, he worked in opera houses in Strasbourg, Prague, Darmstadt and Düsseldorf before being appointed first conductor at the Staatsoper in Berlin (1924-29). He returned to Prague as musical director of the Neues Deutsches Theater and as a regular guest conductor with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra (1929-37). Just before the outbreak of World War II, he escaped the threat of Nazism by taking up appointments with the Scottish Orchestra in Glasgow and with the Residentie-Orkest in The Hague. In 1939, after a short period in Australia, he settled in the USA, where he became a conductor at the New York Metropolitan Opera (1942-6) and then music director of the Cleveland Orchestra, a position he held until his death in 1970. He also enjoyed close relationships with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic. Under his leadership the Clevelanders became one of the greatest

orchestras in the world and Szell himself established a reputation as one of the most remarkable conductors of his time.

This compilation is a mix of live performances and unusual commercial recordings, previously unissued on CD. The current catalogue covers Szell's work in mainstream repertoire – Beethoven, Brahms, Haydn, Mahler, Mozart and Schumann – so these two CDs focus on composers who are less well represented in the conductor's discography. The Cologne radio recordings of La Mer (from 1962) and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No.5 (from 1966) are examples of Szell working live and with musicians back in Central Europe. The shorter pieces – Auber's Fra Diavolo Overture, Delius's Irmelin Prelude and Strauss's Delirien Waltz – show Szell's mastery of lighter musical fare. A real rarity is the 1954 recording of the overture to Wagner's Meistersinger featuring Szell and the New York Philharmonic. Dvorák's Symphony No.8, recorded by EMI in Cleveland in 1970, is Szell's third and final recording of the work and boasts a sound superior to that of the earlier versions. --- bayreuthclassical.blogspot.com

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