

 RICHARD STRAUSS
SYMPHONIA DOMESTICA
GEORGE SZELL
THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA



STRAUSS CENTENNIAL 1864-1964

Strauss

Sinfonia Domestica

Cleveland Orchestra

George Szell

Recorded at Severance Hall, Cleveland, 10 January 1964

Speakers Corner 180gm LP: MS6627

Performance: 5

Only a megalomaniac such as Richard Strauss could have written *Ein Heldenleben* and five years later this sprawling quasi-symphony that documented his relationship with his family, about which most people wouldn't care. Like *Also Sprach Zarathustra* a successful performance needs to hold the works disparate, sometimes vacuous elements together and it almost goes without saying that Szell and his magnificent orchestra do just that, segueing effortlessly between the husband's, wife's and children's themes, Scherzo, Adagio and the rather bombastic Finale, with vividly characterised woodwind, powerful brass and beautifully refined string playing. And as with the recent Speakers Corner Szell, Cleveland Brahms First Symphony, it is difficult to imagine it being better played.

Sound

Balance: 5

Inner balance: 3

Detail and clarity: 4

Dynamic range: 3

A first label 2-eye US pressing was used for comparison and the overall balance has moved forward on the Speakers Corner LP, which is not unusual with solid-state remasterings of tube recordings. The strings and timpani now have more body, the whole orchestra greater weight, impact and presence, although the original has slightly more sparkle. On both clarity and definition are good as opposed to spectacular and neither has an extended dynamic range, but that is down to the master-tapes and given that you don't have to worry about condition or availability, come the desert island it would be the Speakers Corner disc.