

## Weber - Symphonies 1 & 2, Overture 'Der Freischütz' (1995)

Written by bluesever

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Symphony No 1, J. 50 in C/C-dur/utmajeur 1 *Allegro con fuoco* 7:48 2 *Andante* 6:42 3  
*Scherzo: Presto. Trio* 4:16 4 *Finale: Presto* 4:34 5 *Overture to Der Freischütz, J.277*  
10:10 Symphony No 2, J. 51 in C/C-dur/ut majeure  
6 *Allegro* 6:55 7 *Adagio ma nn troppo* 4:34 8 *Menuetto: Allegro. Trio* 1:36 9 *Scherzo:*  
*Presto* 2:27

Philharmonia Orchestra

Claus Peter Flor - conductor

In contrast to the recent version of Weber's two symphonies by Roger Norrington, whose London Classical Players made delightfully vivid play with the textures of something close to Weber's own orchestra, Claus Peter Flor and the Philharmonia suggest a later romanticism; and the recording is intelligently handled to provide a suitable depth of tone. The works can stand this, not least because their implications for later composers are so strong. All the same, it is asking a lot of the Scherzo of the First Symphony to give it a Brahmsian weight, and the Menuetto of the Second simply collapses under the burden. This is partly because Flor is rhythmically rather heavy-handed; and he does not sense with much ease the tempo changes, so that his accelerando and then rallentando at the end of the opening movement of No. 1 sound manufactured. One of the most successful movements, unexpectedly, is the finale of No. 2, a problematic piece that can sound like an afterthought: here, the contrasts between the abruptly broken off phrases and a broodingly dark atmosphere engendered by the central horn passage are well handled to suggest something strikingly enigmatic. This quality also makes for a powerful opening to the Freischütz Overture, though the bright element represented by Agathe's theme is less successful. Those looking for a coupling of the symphonies should opt for the Norrington version, which has a splendid bonus in Melvyn Tan's performance of the *Konzertstück*.' ---John Warrack, gramophone.co.uk

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