



G. Mahler: Symphony No. 6

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Mahler's massive Sixth Symphony runs the gamut of emotion from courageous resolve to inconsolable despair. It's one hell of a piece to get right and the simultaneous release of three very different interpretations helps explain why. The earliest is a bright-toned 1968 Bavarian Radio broadcast by the Radio Orchestra under Rafael Kubelik that runs neck and neck with a contemporaneous DG studio recording by the same artists. Both opt for the fast lane, forging forwards with relentless energy, though the live concert makes rather more sense of the speed. Mahler asks for vehemence and gets it, but the scherzo second movement - the overall tempo is very similar to the first - has a brightly lit quality that's anything but the prescribed "weighty". Kubelik opens the Andante with delectable sweetness, keeping the flow for the duration while the massive finale is swallowed whole. Of the three principal climaxes, two shatter under pressure from deafening hammer blows, though Kubelik's latest rivals drive the point home with even greater force, largely due to their superior sound quality.