

**George Szell conducts Dvorák & Brahms**

aud 95.625

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Fanfare (Mortimer H. Frank - 2014.02.06)

Fanfare
At a bit more than 81 minutes, this may well be the longest CD currently available. Perhaps what is most remarkable about it is that its sound is in no way compromised by its length. To be sure, both works were recorded in stereo by Szell with his Cleveland orchestra and are sonically a bit more attractive than these live accounts recorded in concert at a closer perspective. Moreover, this (presumably) ad hoc Swiss Festival ensemble heard in the Brahms score is not quite a match for Szell's Cleveland ensemble in terms of spit-and-polish perfection. Perhaps, what is most striking about these readings is how often they come close to Szell's studio efforts in terms of tempo, sometimes a bit either slower or faster than his studio versions, but never to the point where a radical change in pacing from one reading to the other is evident. For those who revere Szell, this disc may well prove redundant or attractive. Either way, both accounts are valuable as documents of the work of one of the leading maestros of his time.