

SALES-INFORMATION MAY 2026



HERBERT BLOMSTEDT

conducts and rehearses:

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a

Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks

Herbert Blomstedt conductor

Live recording: Munich, Herkulesaal der Residenz,
13./14.02.2014

- **Booklet:** in German / in English
- **1 CD high - Jewelcase with O-Card**
- **Product Number: 900216**
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Street Date: 15 May 2026

JOHANNES BRAHMS: Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a

The distinguished Swedish conductor Herbert Blomstedt, long associated with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra as a regular guest, conducted Johannes Brahms' *Variations in B-flat major on a Theme by Joseph Haydn*, Op. 56a, in concerts on February 13 and 14, 2014 in the Herkulesaal of the Munich Residenz. This new BR-KLASSIK CD presents not only the live recording of this compelling interpretation but also a live orchestral rehearsal recording from February 10, 2014. The latter forms part of BR-KLASSIK's acclaimed series *Conductors at Rehearsal*, offering a glimpse into their artistic work with the orchestra.

Brahms composed the *Variations on a Theme by Haydn* in Tutzing during the summer of 1873. The work was premiered on November 2, 1873 in Vienna, conducted by the composer himself. A short while later, Brahms introduced an alternative version for two pianos (Op. 56b), which premiered in 1874, also in Vienna. The *Variations* are based on the melody of the so-called "Chorale St. Antoni," taken from the second movement of a Divertimento in B flat major (Hob.II:46) that was most likely mistakenly attributed to Joseph Haydn. The chorale may not even have been written by the composer of the Divertimento and could originally have been a pilgrimage song honouring St. Anthony of Padua in western Hungary (present-day Burgenland). Regardless of their origins, Brahms' *Variations* (theme with nine variations and finale) stand as one of the composer's most important and most celebrated orchestral works, and remain a cornerstone of the Romantic repertoire.

The detailed rehearsal recordings on the CD provide a deeper insight into this magnificent work. Listeners can experience first-hand how the conductor's wishes, ideas and instructions are implemented, how his explanations and his temperament change the resulting sound, and what thoughts lie behind the interpretation of the work. Thanks to this series, which is now also available on CD, the unique artistic partnership between Herbert



Blomstedt and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra can be documented. Blomstedt's seemingly inexhaustible source of energy – music itself – is palpable in every word and every bar.

- Herbert Blomstedt conducts the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra in concerts on February 13 and 14, 2014
- Live recording of Johannes Brahms' famous Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a
- Includes "Conductors at Rehearsal": live recording of the orchestra rehearsal on February 10, 2014 for the Munich concerts
- Electrifying live atmosphere from the Herkulessaal of the Munich Residenz

SYMPHONIEORCHESTER DES BAYERISCHEN RUNDFUNKS
HERBERT BLOMSTEDT conductor

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