



BEETHOVEN

SYMPHONY NO. 4 IN B FLAT, OP. 60 SIX OVERTURES



BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 4 in B flat

- 1 1st mvt. - Adagio - Allegro vivace (8:51)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Adagio (9:52)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Allegro vivace (5:35)
- 4 4th mvt. - Allegro ma non troppo (4:55)

Recorded in September 1954 by Westminster Records
Transferred from UK Nixa LP pressing WLP 20003

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
conductor Hermann Scherchen

Six Beethoven Overtures

- 5 The Creatures of Prometheus, Op. 43 (5:00)
- 6 The Ruins of Athens, Op. 113 (5:18)
- 7 Consecration of the House, Op. 124 (10:38)
- 8 Coriolan, Op. 62 (8:15)
- 9 King Stephen, Op. 117 (7:22)
- 10 Namensfeier, Op. 115 (6:02)

Recorded in June 1954 by Westminster Records
Transferred from UK Nixa LP pressing WLP 5335

The Vienna State Opera Orchestra
conductor Hermann Scherchen

Transfers and XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, December 2009

Original source recordings from the private collection of John Phillips

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Hermann Scherchen

Total duration: 71:48 ©2009 Pristine Audio.

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SCHERCHEN



BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY 4, OVERTURES
ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA VIENNA STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA
STUDIO RECORDINGS MADE IN 1954

SYMPHONY No. 4 - SIX OVERTURES

The original UK release of the Symphony recording was reviewed in "The Gramophone" in April 1956:

"The gramophone's most unpredictable conductor gives a superlative performance of the Beethoven Fourth. It is powerful and tense in a degree not normally associated with the work, but made entirely convincing by the dash and skill of its presentation. The traditional view of the Fourth as a predominantly lyrical symphony has indeed much to recommend it; but the performance here of its first, third and fourth movements welds the lyrical elements briskly, and not at all unacceptably, into a vigorous whole. The slow movement, too, has its felicities: the slightest of accelerandos, just before the end, lends a new point to that familiar demisemiquaver passage. And this movement, along with the others, exhibits to the full the most beautiful orchestral playing: there are woodwind passages here to catch the heart (and, thinking of Scherchen's whirlwind tempo for the bassoon in the finale, the breath!)

As the recording is very good, having all the brilliance but not quite all the richness of the best, this must inevitably become the primary recommendation for a one-sided version of the Fourth; it outclasses Toscanini's H.M.V. on one or two counts. Less tension, if that is sought, may be found in Karajan's reading on the very well-recorded Columbia; here the symphony's finale goes over on to the second side, which is completed by the extended aria *Ab, Perfido!* An even less tense performance is secured by Krips on his Decca disc; but, though recorded most beautifully smoothly, that record, given wholly to the symphony, is now beginning to look expensive..."

Notes on these transfers:

Scherchen's recording of Beethoven's *Fourth Symphony* was originally coupled with a recording of the Fifth, made at the same time and with the same orchestra - the Royal Philharmonic recording under a pseudonym. My original plan to reunite these recordings for a single release was thwarted by the length of the Overtures LP when coupled with his 1951 recording of the *Emperor Concerto* with Badura-Skoda, which together run to a little over 82 minutes. Hence the decision to pair here the Overtures with the Fourth, saving the two mighty "Fifths" for another issue due out shortly after this release.

In both cases here I was luck to have access to two near-mint pressings, and both have responded exceptionally well to the XR remastering processes - the sound quality is excellent.

REVIEW FROM GRAMOPHONE'S ONLINE ARCHIVE - FURTHER NOTES ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM