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The Columbia Beethoven Centennial Series Volume Four

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Producer's Note

This volume is the fourth of five which will reissue, for the first time in one series, the complete symphony cycle which English Columbia commissioned to commemorate the centennial of Beethoven's death in 1927. The first four symphonies were assigned to British conductors (Henschel, Beecham, Wood and the Northern Irish Harty) while the remainder were given to Weingartner, already generally acknowledged as a Beethoven specialist.

For the Seventh and Eighth Symphonies, Weingartner was returning to scores he had only relatively recently recorded for Columbia using the old acoustical process. In the Seventh, he restored a cut he had made in the Scherzo in the previous nine-sided version, while the remade Eighth took one side less due to the elimination of a large overlap of repeated music in the third movement. Both of the present versions are swifter than their 1936 remakes, but the differences are not as marked as those between his 1927 and 1933 versions of the Fifth Symphony (detailed in the notes to Volume 3).

The two overtures date from the Concertgebouw Orchestra's first recording sessions in May, 1926. The early electrical sound is noticeably more primitive than that of the symphonies, showing the great advances Columbia had made over the intervening months. The single movement from the Eighth Symphony was included as the filler side to Mengelberg's recording of Cherubini's *Anacreon* Overture. While not part of the Centennial Symphonies series per se, these sides have been included not only to fill out an otherwise short program, but also because, along with Henry Wood's *Leonore* Overture No. 3 in Volume 1 and the symphonies, they comprise the complete electrical orchestral recordings of Beethoven which Columbia had in print by the end of the Centennial year of 1927, (excluding Louis Zimmermann's recording of the Violin Concerto, released only in Holland).

The sources for the present transfers were American Columbia "Viva-Tonal" pressings. While these are usually the quietest versions available, a higher-than-average amount of surface noise will be noticeable in the Mengelberg items. When played using the typical recording curve for the early electric era, these sides sound dull and bass-heavy; however, by playing them with a "flat" equalization and then significantly boosting the upper frequencies, the balance and detail of the original recordings comes into focus, albeit at the expense of significantly increased hiss. The severe speed fluctuations of the originals have been corrected through the application of Celemony *Capstan*, allowing the performances to be heard with rock-solid pitch for the first time since the original recording sessions.

Mark Obert-Thorn

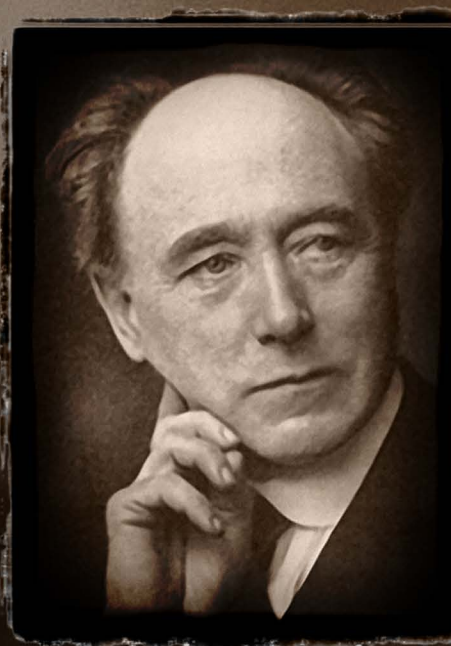
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The Columbia Beethoven Centennial Series



Felix Weingartner
conducts Volume 4

Symphony No. 7
in A major, Op. 92

Symphony No. 8
in F major, Op. 93

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Studio Recordings, 1927

PLUS
Coriolan Overture, Op. 62
Egmont Overture, Op. 84
Symphony No. 8, 2nd mvt.

Willem Mengelberg, conductor
Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam
Studio Recordings, 1926/7

THE COLUMBIA BEETHOVEN CENTENNIAL SERIES

Volume Four

BEETHOVEN *Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92*

- 1 1st mvt - Poco sostenuto - Vivace (10:54)
- 2 2nd mvt - Allegretto (8:05)
- 3 3rd mvt - Presto (7:14)
- 4 4th mvt - Allegro con brio (6:33)

BEETHOVEN *Symphony No. 8 in F major, Op. 93*

- 5 1st mvt - Allegro ma non troppo (7:01)
- 6 2nd mvt - Andante molto moto (3:26)
- 7 3rd mvt - Allegro (3:45)
- 8 4th mvt - Allegro (7:33)

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Felix Weingartner, conductor

BEETHOVEN *Overtures etc.*

- 9 Coriolan, Op. 62 - Overture (7:30)
- 10 Egmont, Op. 84 - Overture (7:29)
- 11 Symphony No. 8 - 2nd mvt - Andante molto moto (4:00)

Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam

Willem Mengelberg, conductor

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Producer & Audio
Restoration Engineer:
Mark Obert-Thorn

Cover artwork based on a photograph
of **Felix Weingartner**

Beethoven Symphony No. 7
Recorded 20, 25 – 26 January 1927
in the Scala Theatre, London

Beethoven Symphony No. 8
Recorded 27 – 28 January 1927
in the Scala Theatre, London

Beethoven Coriolan, Egmont Overtures
Recorded May, 1926
in the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam

Beethoven Symphony No. 8, 2nd mvt.
Recorded 10 June 1927
in the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam

Pitch stabilisation: Andrew Rose
Special thanks to Nathan Brown and Charles Niss for
providing source material. Full discographic details
for all recordings can be found on our website

Total duration: **73:30**

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