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PASC 415

SIR THOMAS BEECHAM

Mozart Symphonies, Vol. 3

Pristine
XR

It is in the highest degree instructive to compare these two versions of Mozart's last and greatest symphony, built with such perfection on themes which, as Tovey has pointed out, are mere conventional tags. The regal poise of the work seems to have made the L.S.O. self-conscious, and there is, to my mind, an inescapable feeling of laboriousness in Krips's reading: whereas the R.P.O., besides being smoother in string tone, presents a highly polished performance lit with musicianship and imagination—though it is possible to disagree with one or two of Beecham's idiosyncracies. The recording, too, must be taken into account; the Columbia is bright and fresh, the Decca fuzzier, coarser and less pleasant in its string tone especially.

In the first movement, the Krips version is certainly vigorous enough, but there is a lack of complete control and some untidy playing, particularly in the last theme of the second-subject group (taken from a song which Mozart wrote for an *Amfossi* opera) and in the demi-semiquaver *gruppetti*, which tend to be skiddly. The *forte* playing, also, is too heavy: Beecham avoids this fault, and differentiates between Mozart's *f* and the modern orchestra's *f*, which Mozart would have called *ff*. Beecham keeps the rhythm and phrasing light and airy, though I don't care for the way he inserts a *ritardando* before the pauses in bars 23 and 41, and it is a pity that side 2 starts a little slower than the previous side. (Why can't they have continuity girls to watch this sort of detail, as they do in films?)

Review of Symphony No. 41 by L.S., *The Gramophone*, December 1950, 78rpm issue, excerpt

Producer's Note

As with previous issues in this series, the symphony recordings here were made for American releases on the US Columbia label, which had long since cut its ties with its British namesake. Yet, unlike several of the Mozart symphony recordings Beecham made for US Columbia it was issued in the UK on EMI's Columbia subsidiary, which at the time was still a 78rpm-only operation. It is one of the few of this series that Beecham returned to EMI's Abbey Road studios later that decade to remake, the Columbia recordings having taken place in London's Kingsway Hall. The 1954 recording of the 40th Symphony, by contrast, found its British issue on the Philips label, two years after its recording. Beecham had previously recorded it with the London Philharmonic for EMI in 1937; this is his only other studio recording.

The two other recordings presented here almost serve to bookend the conductor's recorded career. The Bassoon Concerto was originally issued as a mono LP but was also recorded in stereo, and this is the version presented here from December 1958, and a very good hi-fi recording it is too; where the symphonies needed quite a lot of resurrecting, this was generally fine. By contrast, the 1912 recording of the overture to *Figaro* was his first outing with Mozart and from his second stint in the recording studio, having cut seven sides in 1910. This acoustic recording has been significantly updated in this XR remastering. **Andrew Rose**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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Beecham conducts

Mozart Symphonies

VOLUME THREE

Symphony No. 40

Symphony No. 41

Bassoon Concerto

Gwydion Brooke, bassoon
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Studio Recordings, 1950-1958

Overture: The
Marriage of Figaro

The Beecham Symphony Orchestra
Acoustic Studio Recording, 1912



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MOZART SYMPHONIES VOL. 3 - BASSOON CONCERTO
BEECHAM, BROOKE, ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, BEECHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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Mozart Symphonies Vol. 3

Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K.550

1 1st mvt. - Molto allegro (5:30)

2 2nd mvt. - Andante (9:04)

3 3rd mvt. - Menuetto (5:07)

4 4th mvt. - Allegro assai (4:53)

Symphony No. 41 in C major, K.551, "Jupiter"

5 1st mvt. - Allegro vivace (7:57)

6 2nd mvt. - Andante cantabile (8:22)

7 3rd mvt. - Menuetto: Allegretto (5:48)

8 4th mvt. - Finale: Molto allegro (6:34)

Bassoon Concerto in B flat major, K.191

9 1st mvt. - Allegro (7:26)

10 2nd mvt. - Andante ma Adagio (6:28)

11 3rd mvt. - Rondo (Tempo di Mineutto) (4:48)

Gwydion Brooke bassoon

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

12 Overture - The Marriage of Figaro, K.492 (3:29)

The Beecham Symphony Orchestra

Sir Thomas Beecham conductor

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Sir Thomas Beecham

Symphony No. 40: Columbia ML-5194
Recorded Walthamstow Assembly Hall, 26 April 1954

Symphony No. 41: Columbia ML-4313
Recorded Kingsway Hall, London, 22 February 1950

Bassoon Concerto HMV ALP.1768, ASD.322
Recorded Abbey Road Studio 1, 18 December 1958
A stereo recording

Marriage of Figaro Overture: Odeon X-84
Matrix number 76212, Lxx 3677
Recorded c. 1912

Total duration: 75:26

NB. The Bassoon Concerto is presented in full stereo.
Other recordings are presented in Ambient Stereo

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