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PASC 455

# ALBERT COATES

*conducts Mozart and Beethoven*

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We now come to a cluster of "middle period" works written around the year 1805. The first of these is the *Eroica* (Op. 55), of which Coates secures a very fine performance on genuinely heroic lines. The first and last movements are, I think, the most successful, and these really thrilled me. The failure of the oboes to bring out the main theme of the *Finale* is unfortunate, but it is, after all, a minor blemish, and these tricky instruments more than atone for it by their exemplary behaviour in the *Funeral March*. There is a slight tendency in the records (as in many concert performances) for the strings to overbalance the wood-wind (this is intended more as a hint to the company than as a criticism), and there is one bad join - at the end of the second side, where we want another chord badly. But this is certainly the best *Eroica* I have heard on the gramophone, and it is quite complete.

*"The Beethoven Centenary" (excerpt), P.L., The Gramophone, March 1927*

#### Producer's Note

Conventional wisdom maintains that the Historically Informed Performance movement rescued Classical-era works from the stodginess of big orchestra performances. The present recordings are, perhaps, exceptions that prove the rule. No one could ever accuse Albert Coates (1882 - 1953) of being stodgy in any repertoire; but his tempi in the works of Mozart and Beethoven stand out particularly in the context of most other conductors of his era.

Coates had previously recorded Mozart's Jupiter Symphony acoustically in 1923 (reissued on Pristine PASC 298), a performance whose tempos are, amazingly, even faster than the present electrical remake, although its running time is longer due to the inclusion there of the second movement repeat. The *Impressario* Overture was the filler side for both versions. Both the symphony and the overture were recorded at an August, 1927 session, incongruously separated by excerpts from *Die Walküre* and *Götterdämmerung* for the "Potted Ring", and the first movement was re-recorded at makeup session two months later. The fact that HMV chose Coates to do the electric remake suggests that both they and the public did not find his tempi to be unacceptably outrageous.

If the tempos of the Jupiter still seem a bit extreme, the *Eroica* would strike today's sensibilities as perfectly acceptable, with crisp execution and an inevitable forward momentum. Coates had already recorded the Beethoven Seventh twice, both acoustically (PASC 298) and an unpublished early electric, and the Ninth had similarly been done in both acoustic and electric (PASC 296) versions. Clearly, HMV looked upon Coates as their "go-to" conductor for this repertoire. It is odd, over a year into electrical recording, to hear acoustic-style tuba reinforcement of the bass lines; yet, this practice was to continue even into the Kreisler/Blech Beethoven Violin Concerto, recorded in Berlin at the end of 1926.

A word is in order about the unnamed "Symphony Orchestra" heard in the Beethoven. At the time it was recorded, the London Symphony Orchestra was under contract to the rival Columbia label. Coates had been the principal conductor of the LSO from 1919 to 1922, and he continued to be closely associated with the ensemble. It is likely that the anonymous orchestra is in whole or greater part the LSO. By 1927, the orchestra was under exclusive contract to HMV, and is so credited for the Mozart recordings.

The quietest shellac sources were used for the present transfers - the best sides from two copies each of prewar US Victor "Z" pressings for the Mozart (album M-30) and a late prewar black label Victor reissue (set G-2) of the Beethoven.

Mark Obert-Thorn

# ALBERT COATES

conducts

MOZART

Symphony No. 41, "Jupiter"  
Impressario Overture

BEETHOVEN

Symphony No.3, "Eroica"

London Symphony Orchestra  
Symphony Orchestra

HMV Studio Recordings - 1926 - 1927

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MOZART SYMPHONY No. 41 'JUPITER', IMPRESSARIO OVERTURE  
BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY No. 3 'EROICA' COATES, LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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# COATES conducts Mozart and Beethoven

**MOZART** *Symphony No. 41 in C major, K.551 'Jupiter'*

1

1st Mvt. - Allegro vivace (7:55)

2

2nd Mvt. - Andante cantabile (7:10)

3

3rd Mvt. - Menuetto: Allegretto & Trio (3:40)

4

4th Mvt. - Finale: Molto Allegro (8:03)

London Symphony Orchestra

Recorded 26 August and 25 October 1927 in Queen's Hall, London  
Matrix nos. - CR 1476-3A, 1477-2, 1478-2A, 1479-2A, 1480-2A, 1481-1A and 1482-1A  
First issued on HMV D 1359/62

**MOZART** *The Impresario, K. 486 (Der Schauspieldirektor) - Overture* (3:32)

London Symphony Orchestra

Recorded 26 August 1927 in Queen's Hall, London  
Matrix nos. - CR 1488-1A  
First issued on HMV D 1362

**BEETHOVEN** *Symphony No. 3 in E flat major, Op. 55, 'Eroica'*

6

1st Mvt. - Allegro con brio (12:20)

7

2nd Mvt. - Marcia funebre: Adagio assai (14:49)

8

3rd Mvt. - Scherzo & Trio: Allegro vivace (3:46)

9

4th Mvt. - Allegro molto - Poco andante - Presto (10:27)

Symphony Orchestra

Recorded 16 September and 26 October 1926 in Kingsway Hall, London  
Matrix nos. - CR 678-3A, 679-1, 680-2A, 681-1A, 682-1A, 683-1A, 684-3A, 685-1, 686-1, 687-1 and 688-1  
First issued on HMV D 1158/63

*Albert Coates conductor*

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Mark Obert-Thorn

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Cover artwork based on a  
photograph of Albert Coates

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