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PASC 477

SIR THOMAS BEECHAM

The ABC Blue Network Concerts, Volume 3

Pristine
XR

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"A remarkable artifact from 1945: Thomas Beecham conducting Siegfried's Funeral Music in memory of FDR"

Alex Ross, music critic of The New Yorker, author of *The Rest Is Noise* and *Listen to This*, *Twitter* on Volume 2 (PASC470)

This is an oddity. Beecham's Blue Network broadcast occurred soon after Roosevelt's death in 1945 and, turned into a memorial tribute, was interrupted by reports from the funeral service. Pristine's Andrew Rose has performed skilful surgery, but we lose a chunk of the Unfinished Symphony's andante. What is truly memorable is the intensity Beecham gets from his players in Siegfried's Funeral March, the Schubert, the Elegy from Tchaikovsky's Serenade and Sibelius's Death of Mélisande.

David Cairns, *The Sunday Times*, 29 May 2016 on Volume 2 (PASC470)

A most unusual event can be experienced on another Pristine CD. It was a sad day for the U.S. when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt suddenly died in office two days before this scheduled broadcast (April 14, 1945). This was one of four special concerts conducted by Sir Thomas with a hand-picked orchestra primarily of players from the NBC Symphony and the New York Philharmonic Orchestras. The concert was given in New York's Ritz Hotel before an understandably quiet audience. Broadcast commentator was Milton Cross; his announcements are included. There were a number of technical problems with the source material—Andrew Rose explains how he solved them in CD notes. This disk is a curiosity, for Beecham collectors.

R.E.B., *Classical CD Review* on Volume 2 (PASC470)

During the Second World War Thomas Beecham made few friends in Britain by spending its four most dangerous years living abroad. He sailed for Australia in the spring of 1940, then moved to the United States. He became the music director of the then distinctly low-powered Seattle Symphony in 1941, joining the staff of the Metropolitan Opera in the following year. In all, the peripatetic Bart conducted nearly 20 orchestras during his stay in the New World, including the orchestra of NBC's Blue Network, which thanks to an FCC ruling declaring that no single entity could own more than one radio network eventually became the American Broadcasting Company—today's ABC. In New York for concerts with the Rochester Philharmonic during the first week of April 1945, Beecham conducted a Blue Network afternoon broadcast on April 7, and this is the result ... a wonderfully entertaining album...

Jim Svejda, *Fanfare* on Volume 1 (excerpt) (PASC461)

Producer's Note

Following the hastily-arranged and sombre affair of Beecham's second Blue Network Symphony Orchestra concert (PASC470), his third engagement saw something of a return to normal service, and some far more upbeat commentary from Milton Cross than was heard at the Roosevelt Memorial Concert of Volume Two. Once again we have a "Handel-Beecham" radio première, following on in this respect from the first concert (PASC461). This time the work was a Piano Concerto in A, with the soloist one Betty Humby, who two years previously had become Lady Beecham when she married the conductor, some 29 years her senior, before a police justice in Manhattan. Described by a reviewer as "a straightforward arrangement of themes with the typical Beecham touch", the musical duo had already made a studio recording of the concerto in the January of 1945 with the London Philharmonic, one of a number of recordings Beecham made at the time which remained unissued for contractual reasons until copyright expired in the 1990s. As with the previous volumes, sound quality from these 33rpm transcription discs is on a par with good AM broadcasts, greatly assisted by XR remastering.

Andrew Rose



beecham

abc blue network concerts vol 3

mozart
symphony no. 31 'paris'

handel-beecham
piano concerto in a

chabrier
españa

Betty Humby, piano
Blue Network Symphony Orchestra
Sir Thomas Beecham, conductor
ABC Radio broadcast, 21 April 1945

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BEECHAM THE ABC BLUE NETWORK CONCERTS, VOLUME 3
BEECHAM, BLUE NETWORK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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abc blue network concerts vol 3

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XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on
a photograph of
Sir Thomas Beecham

Total duration: 53:13

1 ABC Radio - Introduction (Milton Cross, announcer) (0:36)

MOZART Symphony No. 31 in D major, "Paris", K297

2 1st mvt. - Allegro assai (8:10)

3 2nd mvt. - Andante (6:37)

4 3rd mvt. - Allegro (3:59)

HANDEL-BEECHAM Piano Concerto in A major

5 1st mvt. - Introduction - Chaconne (10:13)

6 2nd mvt. - Romanza (5:14)

7 3rd mvt. - Minuet (5:31)

8 4th mvt. - Finale (6:19)

Betty Humby *piano*

9 **CHABRIER** España, Rhapsodie pour orchestre (6:34)

Live broadcast on ABC/Blue Network, 4pm, 21 April 1945
Ritz Theater, W. 48th Street, New York City
Announcer: Milton Cross

Blue Network Symphony Orchestra

Sir Thomas Beecham, conductor

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