

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO
PASC 488

Wilhelm Furtwängler

The Wartime Beethoven *Eroica* & *Coriolan*

Pristine
XR

The *Coriolan* performances range in time over eight years, but the post-war performances, despite their effectiveness, are no match for the 1943 performance, one of the most supercharged and dramatic of Furtwängler's performances. It is like a great fist delivering a series of crippling blows, and along with the sense of struggle and agony in the 1943 performance comes the sensation of life ebbing away, of breath leaving a body.

Three places in particular are worth special mention. First, those opening blows, which sweep upward with enormous thrust from the depths to the heights of the orchestra, then the eerie moment Furtwängler makes of the final section (seventy bars from the end), and finally the coda, which along with the end of the Mahler Ninth Symphony, comes as close as music can to capturing the sensation of death and dying.

The magnificent 1944 performance with the Vienna Philharmonic, an authenticated performance that is not only Furtwängler's noblest and most compelling *Eroica*, but one unrivalled on disc. In retrospect, it is ironic that Furtwängler had this recording suppressed legally when it first appeared in 1953 on the Urania label, for it has a thrust and majesty he was unable to recapture in either of his studio *Eroicas*. Like the 1951 Hamburg performance of the Brahms First Symphony or the wartime *Coriolan* Overture, this performance recreates the impact of Furtwängler at his most inspired. It sings with exaltation, particularly in the triumphant sounds of the brass, without losing the work's architectonics. This *Eroica* is more focused and less mercurial than the headstrong "Schreiber" performance, and its nerve ends are less exposed. But the concentration and fierceness are markedly similar, though the 1944 performance seems somewhat broader in attitude because it is more consistent in its momentum, and its fire is more warming.

John Ardoin The Furtwängler Record (*Amadeus Press, 1994*)

Producer's Note

These two wartime recordings, as John Ardoin pointed out in his essential guide to the recordings of Wilhelm Furtwängler, really do capture the conductor - and his musicians - at a higher level than perhaps any other time in his career. They sit along other classic concert recordings Furtwängler made during the darkest days of the 20th century as perhaps definitive readings of the music of Beethoven. Naturally therefore both have surfaced on a number of previous issues, yet never with the fidelity and level of realism to be heard in these new XR remasters. Of the two, the *Coriolan* shows perhaps the rougher edges - the sound is full, clear and superbly dynamic, but things start to fall apart at the uppermost frequencies when the music is at its loudest. The *Eroica* on the other hand is a revelation, and I had to double-check when returning to it for final tracking that I'd not accidentally substituted a much later recording when initially restoring it. But no, it's definitely the 1944 VPO performance, which Ardoin dates across 19th and 20th December, with the unmistakably strident brass, but also with a fullness, richness and clarity that previous issues have barely hinted at. A truly essential *Eroica* for all - even if it's already in your collection from a previous release elsewhere. **Andrew Rose**



PRISTINE
AUDIO

PASC 488

BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY NO. 3 'ERIOCA' - CORIOLAN OVERTURE
FURTWÄNGLER, VIENNA PHILHARMONIC, BERLIN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRAS

furtwängler

classic wartime performances

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO
PASC 488

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of Furtwängler

1 BEETHOVEN Coriolan Overture, Op. 62 (9:14)

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra

Coriolan Overture
Recorded 27-30 June 1943
Alte Philharmonie, Berlin

BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 3 in E flat major, "Erioca", Op. 55

2 1st mvt. - Allegro con brio (15:42)

3 2nd mvt. - Marcia funebre - Allegro Assai (17:47)

4 3rd mvt. - Scherzo: Allegro vivace - Trio (6:44)

5 4th mvt. - Finale: Allegro molto (12:40)

Symphony No. 3
Recorded 19-20 December 1944
Musikvereinsaal, Vienna

Total duration: 62:07

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra

Wilhelm Furtwängler, conductor

For a full catalogue visit
www.pristineclassical.com
or call : (00) 33 979 622713

© 2016 Pristine Audio

PRISTINE
AUDIO

BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY NO. 3 'ERIOCA' - CORIOLAN OVERTURE
FURTWÄNGLER, VIENNA PHILHARMONIC, BERLIN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRAS

PASC 488

PRISTINE
AUDIO