



Toscanini

Beethoven Symphonies, Volume 3



N.B. Due to the limited space available these notes by necessity are reproduced across the three CD inserts that make up the set. They can also be read in full on our website at the page dedicated to each volume's release:

[continued from Volume 2]

The Seventh symphony, RB16105, suffers from a generally poor quality of sound, becoming harsh and distorted at the more powerful orchestral moments. These occur frequently, not only because of the nature of the music, but also because of the undoubtedly Olympian qualities of the performance. Most listeners, however, will probably need to exercise some considerable degree of resolution in order fully to enjoy them.

Much less resolution, fortunately, is necessary for enjoyment of the Eighth symphony. This is rounder-toned, and in general boasts one of the better recordings of the R.C.A. series. Yet the symphony itself is above all that one of Beethoven's series that demands some relaxation; and though this is of course forthcoming from Toscanini to some extent, yet the necessary amiability does seem to come more easily to some other conductors.

The Eighth symphony is on one side of RB 16106, coupled with the first movement of the Ninth*, itself completed on RB16107. The Choral adds to the orchestral forces four soloists, who are all in varying degrees inadequate, and the Robert Shaw Chorale, who sing well and are not. But although Toscanini gives a tireless and fully convincing reading of the monumental work there is a further, non-vocal obstruction to the performance making its full effect: a recording which, never really very bright, tails off at the end in a degree of distortion not to be found in the earlier H.M.V. pressings.

Nevertheless as a whole this series is a most valuable reissue. The best of modern recording is in the nature of the case not to be expected; but we must be grateful to R.C.A. for allowing us to hear much of the Toscanini Beethoven in the best physical sound hitherto possible. And it is, in general, a marvellous Beethoven: relentless, often, yet always at least a convincing view of the music. And less seemingly relentless, perhaps, in normal, sane life, than when chain-listening to the nine symphonies on end: a lunatic undertaking not at all calculated to show each work, or each performance, in its best light.

These works, I know, need no description, the performances little. But the recordings do vary quite considerably, and it might be useful to end by suggesting a single disc for the man who cares very much what his gramophone sounds like, yet, most understandably, feels that this classic Toscanini set must at least be represented in his library. He might well choose RB16101 - superlative performances, decently recorded, of the First and Second symphonies.

M.M., The Gramophone, July 1958

*The alternate Ninth Symphony heard in the present release was the live TV broadcast transmission of 3 April 1948, the second of ten telecasts and the only Toscanini Beethoven Ninth to be broadcast from Studio 8H rather than Carnegie Hall. Dramatic improvements have been made in sound quality here, though there is noticeable treble drop-off at the ends of disc sides. This was the first time Toscanini worked with Robert Shaw for a broadcast - Mortimer Frank states that Toscanini considered Shaw "the finest choral conductor he worked with at NBC".

PASC 600

toscanini

the nine beethoven symphonies



volume three: symphony 9, 'choral'

ann mcknight, jane hobson, irwin dillon, norman scott
the collegiate chorale, dir. robert shaw
nbc symphony orchestra

live recording, 1948

Pristine XR

PRISTINE
AUDIO

PASC 600

BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY No. 9 'Choral'
TOSCANINI, MCKNIGHT, HOBSON, DILLON, SCOTT, NBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

toscanini

the nine beethoven symphonies - volume 3

COMPACT
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BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY No. 9 'Choral'
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1. RADIO-TV Introduction (5:16)

BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125, 'Choral'

2. 1st mvt. - Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso (13:06)

3. 2nd mvt. - Scherzo. Molto vivace - Presto (13:11)

4. 3rd mvt. - Adagio molto e cantabile (13:29)

5. 4th mvt. - Presto - Allegro assai (23:11)

6. RADIO-TV Applause and closing announcements (4:49)

Concert of 3 April 1948

Ann McKnight, soprano - Jane Hobson, contralto

Irwin Dillon, tenor - Norman Scott, bass

Collegiate Chorale, dir. Robert Shaw

NBC Symphony Orchestra

conducted by Arturo Toscanini

XR Remastered by **Andrew Rose**

Recorded at Studio 8H, NBC Radio City, New York

Cover artwork based on a photograph of **Arturo Toscanini**

Total duration: **73:02**

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