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Toscanini

Beethoven Symphony No. 9, Leonore 2

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"The Ninth symphony is about the greatest piece of music ever written. It is a sort of spiritual and musical compound, a sedative, a vitamin, a tonic and a stimulant. Folks, as the opening bars start, you relax. As it unfolds, you reach out and hold your wife's hand."

Fiorello La Guardia, then mayor of New York City, quoted in the *New York Times* of 24 September 1945 promoting the present concert under the headline "MAYOR PLUGS BEETHOVEN".

This unbroadcast recording of Toscanini conducting Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, issued on the 75th anniversary of its performance and during the 250th anniversary year of the composer, has remained unheard by the general public since the day of the concert, and we're delighted to have been able to unearth it and bring it to you at this very special time. Given as a benefit concert for the Italian Welfare League's War Orphans Committee it seems to have been only partially preserved - newspaper reports mention the *Coriolanus* and *Egmont* overtures in addition to the *Leonore* No. 2 which opens this release, and which has survived in slightly better sound quality than the symphony, the latter requiring considerable restoration work to produce a satisfactory sonic outcome.

Of the performance itself, here was the verdict of Mark A. Schubart in the following day's *New York Times*:

"If last night's concert was noble in purpose, it was no less noble in content. For, with the aid of the Collegiate Chorale and a quartet of able soloists, Mr. Toscanini gave a performance of the Ninth Symphony that will not soon be forgotten. The work itself is one of the most difficult to realize fully, and its detractors, even at this late date, are fond of calling it ineffective and ungainly. Some of them have even gone so far as to indicate that Beethoven's deafness made him unsure of what he was writing.

Last night's performance — like any other truly inspired one—constituted an eloquent rebuttal to these opinions. The power and majesty of the work, its gigantic yet just proportions were made clear to the listener, and the music sounded forth clearly and freshly.

The most remarkable performance was that given the final choral movement, thanks largely to the extraordinary singing of the Collegiate Chorale, of which Robert Shaw is conductor. The chorale delivered its music with youthful vigor appropriate to the sentiment of the work, and achieved a clarity of enunciation heard all too seldom these days...

Throughout this lengthy and arduous program, and despite the unpleasantly sultry weather, Mr. Toscanini directed with a firm hand. The audience treated him to an ovation at the beginning of the concert and another at the end, both of which were doubtless intended as personal tributes to a master artist."

Andrew Rose

toscanini
conducts beethoven

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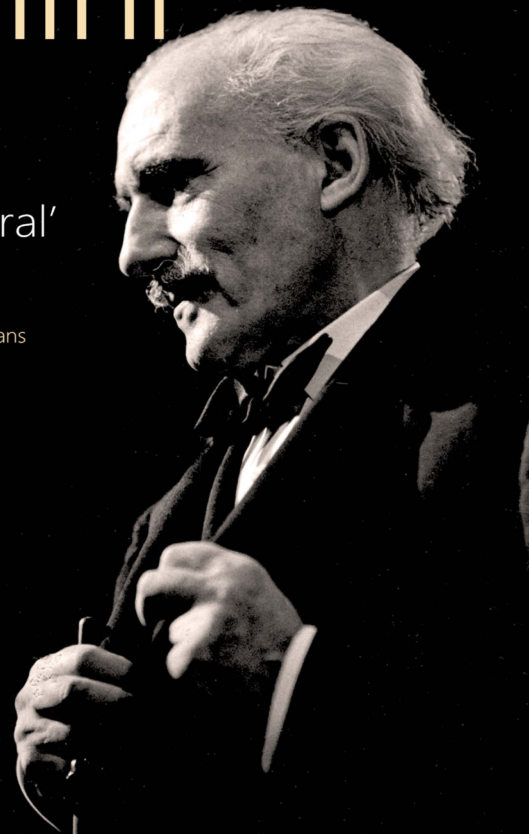
symphony 9, 'choral' leonore overture no. 2

a benefit concert for italian war orphans
previously unissued recording
carnegie hall, 25 september 1945

norma andreotti soprano
nan merriman mezzo-soprano
jan peerce tenor
lorenzo alvary bass

the collegiate chorale, dir. robert shaw
nbc symphony orchestra

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BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY No. 9 'Choral' - LEONORE OVERTURE No. 2
TOSCANINI, ANDREOTTI, MERRIMAN, PIERCE, ALVARY, NBC SO, COLLEGIATE CHORALE

toscanini

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1. BEETHOVEN Leonore Overture No. 2, Op. 72b (13:28)

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

2. 1st mvt. - Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso (13:47)
3. 2nd mvt. - Scherzo. Molto vivace - Presto (12:55)
4. 3rd mvt. - Adagio molto e cantabile (12:57)
5. 4th mvt. - Presto - Allegro assai (22:59)

Norma Andreotti, soprano
Nan Merriman, mezzo-soprano
Jan Pearce, tenor
Lorenzo Alvary, bass
Collegiate Chorale, dir. Robert Shaw

NBC Symphony Orchestra
conducted by Arturo Toscanini

XR Remastered by **Andrew Rose**

Live concert for the benefit of the Italian Welfare League's War Orphans Committee
Performance recorded at Carnegie Hall, New York City, 25 September 1945
Cover artwork based on a photograph of Arturo Toscanini

Total duration: **76:06**

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