

This release concludes Pristine's six-volume survey of Willem Mengelberg's complete Telefunken recordings with the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, begun in 2021 to mark the 150th anniversary of the conductor's birth (28 March 1871). Telefunken was the label for which Mengelberg made the bulk of his commercial discs, and they are presented here in chronological order.

This final volume features some of his rarest recordings. The notes for a 1995 Pearl CD release claimed that only two copies of *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* were known to exist, while Mengelberg's recording of Schubert's 'Unfinished' has long been a sought-after holy grail among collectors. These and other rarities have been newly transferred directly from original Telefunken shellac 78s.

Our program begins on April 16, 1942, the day after the session that produced Mengelberg's remake of the Beethoven Fifth which concluded our previous volume. It opens with three dances from Berlioz's *Damnation de Faust*. Although Mengelberg reversed the order of the first two in a concert broadcast eleven months later, the matrix numbers show that Mengelberg recorded the works in the order reproduced here. The 'Hungarian March' is given complete, unlike the abbreviated version he recorded for Columbia in 1926 (PASC 595). He then returned to native Dutch composers for the final time on disc with Johan Wagenaar's overture *Cyrano de Bergerac*, a work strongly reminiscent of Strauss's *Don Juan*. These recordings, as with most of the April 1942 sessions, have the finest sound Telefunken provided for his Concertgebouw discs.

The following day brought Schubert's *Marche Militaire*, issued only in a sonically compromised dubbing, presumably to reduce the volume of loud passages to avoid wear, and Brahms's *Tragic Overture*. Mengelberg's broad, brooding reading of the latter contrasts sharply with the propulsive urgency heard in the four earlier recordings by Boult, Beecham, Toscanini, and Mengelberg's former Cologne Conservatory classmate, Frederick Stock.

The next sessions from November 1942 began with three sides of Beethoven. The first two contain music from *The Creatures of Prometheus*, including the number whose theme Beethoven later used in the finale of the 'Eroica' Symphony. Telefunken did not issue these sides on 78s; they first appeared in dubbed form on Capitol in the early 1950s and are transferred here from a Capitol LP pressing. The rare overture to *The Ruins of Athens*, originally issued as the filler for Eugen Jochum's *Parsifal* 'Good Friday Spell,' has been taken from the same LP.

Four days later came Mengelberg's unusually swift *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*. Like the Beethoven selections and the two Schubert symphonies recorded seven months later, it suffers from peak distortion at louder moments inherent in the original recording, rather than from disc wear. Given Telefunken's excellent results in April, this is puzzling. Because the distortion resembles that sometimes heard on early magnetic tape, I suspect these final sessions may have been recorded on tape and dubbed to wax masters. Due to the destruction of Telefunken's archives in a 1950s Elbe River flood, we may never know.

Mengelberg's final sessions, held over two days in June 1943, focused on Schubert's last two symphonies. The 'Great' C Major came first, appropriately enough since it was still generally known as the Seventh. Mengelberg again confounds expectations, taking a faster-than-usual introduction in the first movement but more measured tempi in the third. The uncut third movement was spread over three sides, with its da capo repeat requiring the listener to replay the opening side*. The *luftpause* I have left before the trio follows Mengelberg's December 1940 live broadcast.

In the 'Unfinished,' critic Rob Cowan has noted that the exposition repeat heard in Mengelberg's November 1939 broadcast is omitted here, while the string portamenti are more restrained. Previous transfers relied on tape dubs of discs from a private collector and a Dutch archive. For this edition, I worked directly from a complete original 78 set, supplemented by two single discs from other sets, in the hope of achieving better results.

Mark Obert-Thorn

*From the matrix sequence, it appears that a separate final side of the Scherzo was recorded but not issued in order to save an extra disc.

mengelberg

concertgebouw orchestra
the telefunken recordings volume 6

PRISTINE
AUDIO
PASC 776

schubert
symphony no. 9, 'the great'
symphony no. 8, 'unfinished'

beethoven
the creatures of prometheus - excerpts

berlioz
the damnation of faust - excerpts

mozart
eine kleine nachtmusik

studio recordings, 1942-43

Obert-Thorn



mengelberg

concertgebouw telefunken recordings vol. 6



PASC 776

disc one (72:15)

BERLIOZ La damnation de Faust, Op. 24

1. Menuet des Follets (5:50)
 2. Danse des Sylphes (2:40)
 3. Marche hongroise (4:21)
- Recorded 16 April 1942 · Matrices: 026409/11
First issued on Telefunken SK 3243/4

4. WAGENAAR Cyrano de Bergerac, Overture, Op. 23 (13:33)

Recorded 16 April 1942 · Matrices: 026412/5
First issued on Telefunken SK 3744/5

5. SCHUBERT Marche militaire No. 1, D733 (4:33)

Recorded 17 April 1942 · Matrix: 026416
First issued on Telefunken SK 3244

6. BRAHMS Tragic Overture, Op. 81 (14:37)

Recorded 17 April 1942 · Matrices: 026417/20
First issued on Telefunken SK 3327/8

BEETHOVEN The Creatures of Prometheus, Op. 43

7. Overture (4:46)
 8. No. 16 - Finale: Allegretto (4:49)
- Recorded 1 November 1942
Matrices: 027008/9
First issued on Capitol P 8078 (LP)

BEETHOVEN The Ruins of Athens, Op. 113

Recorded 1 November 1942
Matrix: 027010
First issued on Telefunken SK 3713

Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam
conducted by **Willem Mengelberg**

MOZART Serenade No. 13 in G major, K525

- 'Eine kleine Nachtmusik'
10. 1st Mvt.: Allegro (3:42)
 11. 2nd Mvt.: Romance: Andante (4:27)
 12. 3rd Mvt.: Menuetto: Allegretto (1:55)
 13. 4th Mvt.: Rondo: Allegro (3:48)
- Recorded 5 November 1942 · Matrices: 027011/4
First issued on Telefunken SK 3750/1

disc two (73:37)

SCHUBERT Symphony No. 9 in C major, D944

- 'The Great'
1. 1st Mvt.: Andante - Allegro ma non troppo (12:39)
 2. 2nd Mvt.: Andante con moto (14:19)
 3. 3rd Mvt.: Scherzo: Allegro vivace - Trio (11:52)
 4. 4th Mvt.: Finale: Allegro vivace (11:55)
- Recorded 16-17 June 1943 · Matrices: 026989/026997 & 026999/027001
First issued on Telefunken SK 3341/6

SCHUBERT Symphony No. 8 in B minor, D759

- 'Unfinished'
5. 1st Mvt.: Allegro moderato (11:11)
 6. 2nd Mvt.: Andante con moto (11:38)
- Recorded 17 June 1943 · Matrices: 027002/7
First issued on Telefunken SK 3352/4

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: **Mark Obert-Thorn**

Special thanks to Ward Marston for providing source material
Cover Artwork based on a photograph of Willem Mengelberg
All recordings made in the Grote Zaal, Concertgebouw

Total duration: **2hr 25:52**

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