



PASC198

BEETHOVEN

SYMPHONY No. 2 IN D, Op. 36

SYMPHONY NO. 8 IN F, Op. 93



PASC198

Symphony No. 2 in D major

1 1st mvt. - Adagio molto - Allegro con brio (9:26)

2 2nd mvt. - Larghetto (10:07)

3 3rd mvt. - Scherzo (Allegro) (3:47)

4 4th mvt. - Allegro molto (5:58)

Recorded September 1954

Symphony No. 8 in F major

5 1st mvt. - Allegro vivace e con brio (8:23)

6 2nd mvt. - Allegretto scherzando (3:53)

7 3rd mvt. - Tempo di menuetto (4:35)

8 4th mvt. - Allegro vivace (6:23)

Recorded 20th December 1954

Issued as Westminster 12 LP: WL 5362

Original LP used the pseudonym "The Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of London"

The transcription from UK Pye Nixa Red Label issue WLP 5362

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
conducted by Hermann Scherchen

Transfers and XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, November 2009
Cover artwork based on a photograph of Hermann Scherchen

Total duration: 52:32 ©2009 Pristine Audio.

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SCHERCHEN

BEETHOVEN SYMPHONIES 2 AND 8

THE ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA CONDUCTOR HERMANN SCHERCHEN
STUDIO RECORDINGS MADE IN 1954



PRISTINE
AUDIO

PRISTINE
AUDIO

BEETHOVEN

SYMPHONIES 2 AND 8

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO
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SCHERCHEN, ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

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BEETHOVEN SYMPHONIES NO. 2 IN D, NO. 8 IN F
SCHERCHEN, ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

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PRISTINE
AUDIO

The original UK release of these recordings was reviewed in "The Gramophone" in August 1955:

BEETHOVEN. Symphony No. 2 in D major, op. 36. Symphony No. 8 in F major, Op. 93
Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of London conducted by Hermann Scherchen. Nixa WLP5362 (12 in., 36s. 5d.)

Scherchen's performance of the Finale of the 8th is the most exciting thing I have heard on a record for a long time. Don't miss it! He actually plays it at Beethoven's metronome marking, a speed usually considered impossible, and the result is tremendously exhilarating, the sort of Finale performance that would bring any concert-hall audience to its feet with cheers.

Of course, this could not be brought off without an orchestra of the utmost skill (for even at this speed it is brilliantly played). No lesser collection of players could get away with this or, too, with the Finale of the 2nd Symphony. Who they are, one doesn't know, for there is no orchestra of this name playing publicly in London.

But to return to the music. The whole of the 8th Symphony is played at speeds that are as near as matters Beethoven's, as given in his metronome marks. This gives us a first movement that is faster than we usually hear, and I personally felt uncomfortable as I was listening; but perhaps this is a matter of what one is used to and one should try to accustom oneself to it. The second movement, with such light and neat playing, is wholly delightful, and the Minuet is extremely alive and alert. This is certainly a performance to be heard, and heard over and over again, for it is full of revealing understanding.

Beethoven gave no metronome markings to his 2nd Symphony, so we lack such precise indications of what he really wanted. Scherchen takes the swift view again, with a slow movement speed that is almost *allegretto* in feeling. Toscanini and Schuricht play it similarly. Goossens' performance is the very reverse, so much so that even if you prefer a slower speed, I doubt whether you will really enjoy that particular one. Scherchen continues with a delightfully fleet Scherzo and a Finale that is indeed *allegro molto*.

This is a record as interesting as it is successful in its interpretations, and it is equally distinguished by the wonderful playing. The recording needed some top taken off on my gramophone and the volume turned up fairly high, but it was then very acceptable. T.H.

REVIEW FROM GRAMOPHONE'S ONLINE ARCHIVE - FURTHER NOTES ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM