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Willem Mengelberg conducts Beethoven and Strauss

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Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 in E flat major (Op. 55), also known as the *Eroica* (Italian for "heroic"), is a landmark musical work marking the full arrival of the composer's "middle-period," a series of unprecedented large scale works of emotional depth and structural rigor.

The symphony is widely regarded as a mature expression of the classical style of the late eighteenth century that also exhibits defining features of the romantic style that would hold sway in the nineteenth century. The Third was begun immediately after the Second, completed in August 1804, and first performed April 7, 1805.

The work is a milestone in the history of the classical symphony for a number of reasons. The piece is about twice as long as symphonies by Haydn or Mozart—the first movement alone is almost as long as many Classical symphonies, if the exposition repeat is observed. The work covers more emotional ground than earlier works had, and is often cited as the beginning of the Romantic period in music. The second movement, in particular, displays a great range of emotion, from the misery of the main funeral march theme, to the relative solace of happier, major key episodes. The finale of the symphony shows a similar range, and is given an importance in the overall scheme which was virtually unheard of previously — whereas in earlier symphonies, the finale was a quick and breezy finishing off, here it is a lengthy set of variations and fugue on a theme Beethoven had originally written for his ballet music *The Creatures of Prometheus*.

Notes from Wikipedia

Recording and restoration notes

The recording here has often been used to "complete" Mengelberg's 1940 Beethoven cycle, which otherwise consists of recordings made by Dutch radio from live concert broadcasts - the source of the recording here of *Don Juan*.

However, this recording of the *Eroica* Symphony was actually made as a studio recording and issued on German Telefunken 78s, and as such I've distanced it slightly from our series of 1940 live Beethoven recordings. Although the sound quality is excellent for 78s of this era, especially following XR remastering, it lacks the clarity, a product of a particularly wide frequency and dynamic range, achieved on the glass acetates used by AVRO's radio engineers when preserving their broadcasts.

The Beethoven discs showed large differences in both high treble and background noise between the starts and ends of each side, and much work was required to try to retain as much of the former whilst reducing as much of the latter and providing smooth side changes. By contrast the Strauss was a much more straightforward affair, with the main task being reduction of swish. **AR**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM

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WILLEM MENGELBERG

BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY No. 3 "EROICA"

R. STRAUSS DON JUAN

CONCERTGEBOUW
ORCHESTRA
STUDIO & LIVE RECORDINGS, 1940

Mengelberg Beethoven & Strauss

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

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro con brio (14:22)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Marcia funebre: Adagio assai (15:56)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Scherzo: Allegro vivace (4:01)
- 4 4th mvt. - Finale: Allegro molto (11:14)

Recorded 11th November, 1940
Issued as Telefunken 78s, SK 3117-22
Matrix Nos. CB 025350-61

5 R. STRAUSS Don Juan, Op. 20 (17:08)

Recorded live at Royal Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, 12th December, 1940
Transfer from Philips LP W 09908 L

Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam Willem Mengelberg

32-bit XR remastering by
Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of **Willem
Mengelberg**

Total duration: **62:41**

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