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SIR THOMAS BEECHAM

Mozart Symphonies Vol. 1 ⊕ Acoustics

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Much has been written regarding the beauties of Columbia orchestral records, but exceptional as they have been, it has remained for a British conductor to raise the standard to an even higher level. Few conductors have wielded such an influence over the music of the past decade as Sir Thomas Beecham, and in securing him with the Beecham Symphony Orchestra exclusively, the Columbia company have scored a decided musical hit. For Mr. Beecham is more than a conductor. He is a pioneer, and a daring one. At the age of 19 he founded an amateur orchestra near Liverpool, and on one occasion successfully deputised for Dr. Richter, who, through indisposition, failed to appear. Six years later he was conducting the Queen's Hall Orchestra, subsequently forming the New Symphony Orchestra, which he organised and led until 1909. Then he founded his own Beecham Symphony Orchestra, which immediately became one of the greatest and most important organisations of its kind, as it is today. But the feeling that he was as yet painting, as it were, on too small a canvas, turned his attention to other fields of music, and as a result we had, in 1910, that remarkable opera season at Covent Garden, when the much discussed "Elektra" of Richard Strauss (an "ecstasy of discord" as it was called) was produced. Further opera seasons have since succeeded it, among them the never-to-be-forgotten Russian opera season, which brought to Great Britain the Russian vogue in music. This is the daring pioneer who has laid his imprint upon Columbia Records, and as was only to be expected the result is a new achievement. Mr. Beecham takes us through "The Magic Flute" Overture of Mozart, and a more delightful interpretation it would be difficult to conceive. Similarly, in the Russian composer Borodin's "Prince Igor", we have a different calibre of music, exquisitely delineated by a master hand. In these records "tone colour" is an actuality, not a mere phrase. The warmth and brilliance of the music is a tribute to Columbia recording.

The Sound Wave, Vol. 9, No. 10, review of Columbia L-1001, October 1915

Producer's Note

All but one of Beecham's early acoustic Mozart recordings was made for Columbia, and it was to the American company of the same name that he returned in the early 1950s to record a series of seven Mozart symphonies with another of his "own" orchestras, the Royal Philharmonic. The symphonies have been in and out of print since then, and their original, somewhat harsh sound quality to an extent masked their exquisite brilliance. Despite this, they have always been highly regarded, and it can only be hoped that these new transfers and XR remastering will further enhance their reputation. But that's not to overlook his earliest Mozart recordings (a single side cut for Odeon in 1912 will appear on a later volume here), made with an orchestra that some rated as the finest he ever conducted. Again, XR remastering has helped bring these primitive horn-based sound recordings just a small step closer to the modern listener's appreciation - and very fine they are too. **Andrew Rose**

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

Mozart Symphonies

VOLUME ONE

Symphony No. 31 "Paris"
Symphony No. 35 "Haffner"
Symphony No. 36 "Linz"
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Studio recordings, 1951-54

Columbia Mozart Acoustics
The Magic Flute: Overture
Divertimento No. 2, 5th mvt.
The Marriage of Figaro: Overture
The Marriage of Figaro: Sarabande
Beecham Symphony Orchestra
Studio recordings, 1915-1917



Mozart Symphonies Vol. 1

Symphony No. 31 in D, K.297, "Paris"

- 1 1st mvt. - Adagio - Allegro (7:35)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Andantino (7:03)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Finale (Presto) (3:38)

Symphony No. 35 in D, K.385, "Haffner"

- 4 1st mvt. - Allegro con spirito (5:31)
- 5 2nd mvt. - Andante (4:26)
- 6 3rd mvt. - Minuetto (3:57)
- 7 4th mvt. - Finale (Presto) (4:02)

Symphony No. 36 in C, K.425, "Linz"

- 8 1st mvt. - Adagio - Allegro spiritoso (8:33)
- 9 2nd mvt. - Poco adagio (9:00)
- 10 3rd mvt. - Menuetto (4:08)
- 11 4th mvt. - Finale (Presto) (5:42)

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Mozart Columbia Acoustics

- 12 The Magic Flute - Overture (6:46)
- 13 Divertimento in D, K131 - 5th mvt. - Minuet and Trio (3:50)
- 14 The Marriage of Figaro - Overture (3:58)
- 15 The Marriage of Figaro - 'Sarabande' (Fandango, Act 3) (1:45)

Beecham Symphony Orchestra

Sir Thomas Beecham conductor

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of
Sir Thomas Beecham

Symphony No. 31: Columbia ML-4474
Recorded Kingsway Hall, London, 9 March 1951
Symphony No. 35: Columbia ML-5001
Recorded Walthamstow Assembly Hall, 7 December 1953
Symphony No. 36: Columbia ML-5001
Recorded Walthamstow Assembly Hall, 1 May 1954

Magic Flute Overture: Columbia L-1001
Matrix Nos. 6559/60, recorded 1915
Divertimento in D: Columbia L-1132
Matrix Nos. 6904, recorded 1916
Figaro Overture: Columbia L-1115
Matrix Nos. 6908, recorded 1916
Figaro Sarabande: Columbia L-1227
Matrix Nos. 76037, recorded 1917

Total duration: 79:54

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