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MENDELBERG

Beethoven Symphonies 1 & 3

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Mengelberg

in New York

Producer's Note

Although Willem Mengelberg had first come to New York to open the Philharmonic's season in 1905, it was not until sixteen years later that he appeared regularly before the city's concert-going public. At that time, the board of the fledgling National Symphony Orchestra (unrelated to the later orchestras of the same name headed by Walter Damrosch and Hans Kindler) brought Mengelberg in to rebuild the ensemble and share the leadership with Artur Bodanzky. The next year, following Mengelberg's recommendation, the orchestra was merged into the New York Philharmonic, with the Dutchman ultimately becoming principal conductor. It was at this time that Mengelberg made his first recordings with the ensemble.

As the decade progressed, both Furtwängler and Toscanini were engaged for extended guest conducting appearances with the Philharmonic. While the former left after two seasons, Toscanini stayed on as the orchestra merged with yet another ensemble, Damrosch's New York Symphony, to form the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York in the fall of 1928. Toscanini was appointed principal conductor, with Mengelberg accepting the lesser role of associate. Ultimately, politics from within and without the orchestra took their toll, and Mengelberg left New York in early 1930, never to return.

Before he did, however, he completed one final series of sessions for Victor which featured the two Beethoven symphonies included here. Unlike his previous recordings with the orchestra, these sessions were held in Liederkrantz Hall, a presumably cheaper-to-rent venue than Carnegie Hall, a choice which was most likely driven by the then-recent stock market crash that brought on the Great Depression. While the ensemble was at its full strength, close miking and an unreverberant hall made it sound much smaller. In addition to the two symphonies, Mengelberg also recorded the overtures to *Die Zauberflöte*, *Egmont* and *Hansel und Gretel* during these sessions (all reissued on Pristine PASC 378).

One noteworthy aspect of the present *Eroica* is the inclusion of all repeats. While the one in the third movement was only sporadically observed during the 78 rpm era (it is, for example, absent in Mengelberg's Telefunken recording with the Concertgebouw), this would be the only appearance of the first movement repeat on any commercial recording until Erich Kleiber's 1955 Vienna Philharmonic LP. Mengelberg's only complete live broadcast of the work with the Concertgebouw omits it. In the First Symphony, he observes the repeats in the first and fourth movements, as he did in his Concertgebouw broadcasts but not in his Telefunken recording. He does not take the second movement repeat in any extant performance.

The transfers were made using the best sides of two Victor "Z" shellac pressings for each set. Although this is the quietest material in which they were available, the original recordings have a higher-than-usual amount of noise inherent in the original matrices. A small amount of reverberation has been added to bring warmth to the dry-sounding originals. **Mark Obert-Thorn**

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

BEETHOVEN
Symphony No. 1
Symphony No. 3
"Eroica"

Philharmonic-Symphony
Orchestra of New York

Studio Recordings · 1930

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BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY NO. 1 - SYMPHONY NO. 3 'EROICA'
MENGELBERG, PHILHARMONIC-SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK

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Producer and Audio Restoration
Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn

Cover artwork based on a photograph
of Willem Mengelberg

MENGELBERG *conducts* Beethoven

Symphony No. 1 in C, Op. 21

- 1 1st Mvt. - Adagio molto - Allegro con brio (9:14)
- 2 2nd Mvt. - Andante cantabile con moto (7:05)
- 3 3rd Mvt. - Menuetto: Allegro molto e vivace (3:47)
- 4 4th Mvt. - Adagio - Allegro molto e vivace (5:55)

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat, Op. 55, "Eroica"

- 5 1st Mvt. - Allegro con brio (17:41)
- 6 2nd Mvt. - Marcia funebre: Adagio assai (16:06)
- 7 3rd Mvt. - Scherzo: Allegro vivace (6:14)
- 8 4th Mvt. - Allegro molto (11:48)

Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York
Willem Mengelberg

Beethoven Symphony No. 1
Recorded 9 January 1930
in Liederkrantz Hall, New York
Matrix nos.: CVE 58175-2, 58176-1, 58177-3,
58180-2, 58181-2, 58182-1, 58178-1 and
58179-2
First issued on Victor 7211/4 in album M-73

Beethoven Symphony No. 3
Recorded 4 and 9 January 1930
in Liederkrantz Hall, New York
Matrix nos: CVE 58152-3, 58153-3, 58154-3,
58155-3, 58156-3, 58157-1, 58158-2, 58159-
1, 58160-2, 58161-1, 58162-1, 58172-2,
58173-2 and 58174-2
First issued on Victor 7439/45 in album M-115

Total duration: 77:50

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MENGELBERG, PHILHARMONIC-SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK

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