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PASC 413

# SIR THOMAS BEECHAM

## Mozart Symphonies, Vol. 2

Pristine  
XR

It is good to hear Beecham in Mozart again after the characterless performances we often sit through these days. Every phrase has real shape and is played with such loving care; there is the utmost attention to detail, so that the ear is constantly enchanted. I know some people think Beecham's Mozart too 'exquisite'—so do tastes change—but I hope there are plenty who, like me, will find real delight in the genius of his interpretation (and, of course, in the quality of playing he drew from his orchestra). And when it comes to Mozart's light music, the *Divertimento*, anyone who doesn't delight in Beecham's incomparably stylish way with it, as well as in the superb playing—especially from the woodwind and the four horns—well, I am sorry for him!

Review by **T.H., The Gramophone**, February 1968, LP reissue of *Divertimento* No. 2 *excerpt*

### Producer's Note

The symphony recordings here were both made for US Columbia LP releases. In both cases the works had been recorded with Beecham's previous orchestra, the London Philharmonic, for EMI 78rpm release in March 1940, but in both cases these are the only studio recordings he made to tape, and the only recordings made with the Royal Philharmonic of the two symphonies. Both were issued later in Europe on Philips and its subsidiary label, Fonata, from which the present transfers were drawn. Recording quality, post-XR remastering, turns out to have been remarkably and consistently good, albeit in mono for both recordings - the originals prior to this remastering being somewhat harsh in reproduction, particularly the 1950 recording of the 38th Symphony.

By contrast the *Divertimento*, made by EMI in the most controlled conditions of Abbey Road studios required less XR adjustment to bring out its magic. The recording does, however, raise some questions to which I, at the time of writing, can offer only speculative answers. The recording originally appeared on a mono LP, alongside a 1957 recording of the *Jupiter Symphony*. Its reissue in 1968 was, likewise, mono, but a recent CD issue on EMI is in full stereo.

A careful examination of the mono and stereo issues reveals a number of differences, but at the same time a number of clear similarities. At times one is convinced they are the same recording - elsewhere the playing is clearly different, if only slightly. I can only conclude that the recording sessions were captured both in mono and stereo separately (this being a time when stereo recording was still in an experimental stage). The mono tapes would have been edited for release, as is normal, but when EMI returned to the stereo tapes for their recent reissue, either by accident or by design they produced a different edit, using some of the same and some alternate takes by comparison to the original mono master approved by Beecham, which appears here. A careful examination will reveal considerable timing differences in some movements between the two versions. **Andrew Rose**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT [WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM](http://WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM)  
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# Beecham

 conducts  

## Mozart Symphonies

VOLUME TWO

Symphony No. 38 "Prague"

Symphony No. 39

Divertimento No. 2

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra  
Studio Recordings, 1950/1955



## Mozart Symphonies Vol. 2

### Symphony No. 38 in D, K.504, "Prague"

- 1 1st mvt. - Adagio - Allegro (10:19)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Andante (10:05)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Finale (Presto) (4:06)

### Symphony No. 39 in E flat, K.543

- 4 1st mvt. - Adagio - Allegro (8:57)
- 5 2nd mvt. - Andante con moto (8:42)
- 6 3rd mvt. - Menuetto e Trio (4:20)
- 7 4th mvt. - Allegro (4:15)

### Divertimento No. 2 in D, K.131

- 8 1st mvt. - Allegro (4:16)
- 9 2nd mvt. - Adagio (5:08)
- 10 4th mvt. - Allegretto (5:06)
- 11 5th mvt. - Minuet and Trio (4:47)
- 12 6th mvt. - Allegro molto - Allegro assai (6:39)

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

*Sir Thomas Beecham conductor*

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of  
Sir Thomas Beecham

Symphony No. 38: Columbia ML-4313  
Recorded Kingsway Hall, London, 18 April 1950

Symphony No. 39: Columbia ML-5194  
Recorded Walthamstow Assembly Hall, 22 October 1955

Divertimento No. 2: HMV ALP.1536  
Recorded Abbey Road Studio 1, 22 December 1955  
Original mono edit (see programme notes)  
NB. Beecham omits the 3rd movement

Total duration: 79:54

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