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PASC 427

## The Columbia Beethoven Centennial Series Volume Five

PRISTINE  
AUDIO

### Producer's Note

This volume is the last of five which have reissued, for the first time in one series, the complete symphony cycle which English Columbia commissioned to commemorate the centennial of Beethoven's death in 1927. The first four symphonies were assigned to British conductors (Henschel, Beecham, Wood and the Northern Irish Harty) while the remainder were given to Weingartner, already generally acknowledged as a Beethoven specialist.

This final symphony of Beethoven's was actually the first in the series to be recorded. In fact, the Centennial Symphony Series had not yet been envisioned when it was taken down, and it became a part of it later by default. Columbia had only been making electrical recordings for five months when the ambitious project of recording the Beethoven Ninth was undertaken. By that time, Weingartner had already made acoustic recordings of the Fifth, Seventh and Eighth Symphonies, and had begun an acoustic Sixth that was abandoned when the microphone came in. It was natural that Columbia would turn to him for the electrical recording premiere of the Ninth.

Weingartner's reading is, overall, faster than his 1935 remake with the Vienna Philharmonic, although most of the difference is in the final movement, which is swifter by nearly a minute and a half here, and admittedly sounds rushed in places. Part of this may have been due to Columbia's enforcement of a four-minute limit for twelve-inch sides at this early stage of electrical recording. Like a couple other early recordings of the symphony – Albert Coates' version from seven months later with much the same orchestral forces (Pristine PASC 296) and Stokowski's 1934 Philadelphia version – the "Ode to Joy" was sung in English.

The sources for the present transfer were American Columbia "Viva-Tonal" and large label, post-"Royal Blue" shellac pressings. While these are usually the quietest versions available, a higher-than-average amount of surface noise will be noticeable due to the early date of the recording. The downward pitch drift on each side the originals has been corrected through the application of Celemony Capstan, allowing the performance to be heard with rock-solid pitch for the first time since the original recording sessions. I have added a small amount of digital reverberation to bring some warmth to the rather dry studio which Columbia had previously used for acoustic recordings.

Mark Obert-Thorn

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT [WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM](http://WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM)  
SARL Pristine Audio, 144 Rue de l'Eglise, 24610 St. Méard de Gurçon, France

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## The Columbia Beethoven Centennial Series



Felix Weingartner  
conducts Volume 5

Symphony No. 9  
in D minor, Op. 125, "Choral"

Miriam Licette (soprano)  
Muriel Brunskill (contralto)  
Hubert Eisdell (tenor)  
Harold Williams (bass-baritone)  
with Chorus

London Symphony Orchestra

Studio Recording, 1926

Producer & Audio  
Restoration Engineer:  
**Mark Obert-Thorn**

Cover artwork based on a  
photograph of **Felix  
Weingartner**

## THE COLUMBIA BEETHOVEN CENTENNIAL SERIES

### *Volume Five*

#### **BEETHOVEN** *Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125, "Choral"*

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso (15:20)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Molto vivace (10:27)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Adagio molto e cantabile - Andante moderato (14:23)
- 4 4th mvt. - Presto - Allegro assai (21:32)

Miriam Licette (soprano)  
Muriel Brunskill (contralto)  
Hubert Eisdell (tenor)  
Harold Williams (bass-baritone)

Chorus and London Symphony Orchestra  
*Felix Weingartner, conductor*

**Beethoven Symphony No. 9**  
Recorded 16–17 March 1926 in the  
Columbia Studios, Petty France,  
London

Matrix nos.: WAX 1350-2, 1351-2,  
1352-2, 1353-2, 1354-2, 1355-3,  
1356-2, 1357-1, 1358-2, 1359-2,  
1360-2, 1361-1, 1362-2, 1363-2,  
1364-2 & 1365-2

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Pitch stabilisation: Andrew Rose

Total duration: **61:42**

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