



Stokowski

conducts Beethoven and Schubert



Producer's Note

Leopold Stokowski is not usually associated with the Viennese Classical repertoire; yet, there were certain composers and works to which he returned time and again throughout his career. While he only made one commercial recording of a Haydn symphony and only one movement of a Mozart symphony, his Beethoven discography is more substantial. The Seventh Symphony was a work he recorded three times. The present version is his first, and is prefaced by a discussion of themes by the conductor.

This was not the first time such a venture into music appreciation had been attempted; two months earlier, Walter Damrosch had recorded a similar analysis of the "Eroica" Funeral March (reissued on Pristine PASC 395). At the same session, Stokowski recorded an outline for the Brahms First Symphony, and later that year would record two more, for the Franck Symphony and the Dvořák "New World". In the latter two recordings, an uncredited Artur Rodzinski would serve as the pianist, as Stokowski tended to turn away from the microphone while still speaking in order to play his excerpts. The talk sides were only released in the USA, although a Spanish-language version recorded with another speaker was prepared for the South American market.

There are few Stokowskian exaggerations in the performance of the symphony itself, the most notable being the distended, swooping portamenti employed midway through the final movement. On the whole, it is a reading of immense vitality and rhythmic propulsion, aided by playing which was on a level far above what every orchestra other than, perhaps, Mengelberg's Concertgebouw was presenting on records at the time. A classic account, it ranks with Toscanini's New York Philharmonic version as one of the finest ever committed to disc.

For Schubert's "Unfinished", Stokowski and his Philadelphians were returning to a work they had previously set down acoustically almost exactly three years earlier (Pristine PASC 441). The new electrical process better conveys the burnished sheen of the strings in a swiftly-flowing reading which alternates lyricism with explosive outbursts. As with the Beethoven, Stokowski would go on to re-record this work two more times during his long career. The Schubert encores were also favored by the conductor in later recordings. The 12-inch, longer version of the *Rosamunde* Ballet Music was not first released until late in the LP era, having been re-recorded later in the year by a 10-inch version with more repeats cut.

The sources for the transfers were "Z" and "Gold"-label pressings, with vinyl tests used for the unissued *Rosamunde* side as well as the last side of the first movement of the Beethoven. The first side of that same movement came from a first edition "Orthophonic" pressing. Later copies on quieter shellac use a sonically inferior dubbing which was substituted to avoid blasting. This marginally-noisier side has been treated to a light decrackling, and all the sides have had their original rising pitches stabilized using Celemony Capstan software. I have opted to keep the upper frequencies wide open, so as to reveal as much detail as possible. As one can hear on the two sides which come from vinyl pressings, there is a good deal of hiss inherent in the original recordings that is not a function of the generally quiet shellacs used for the transfers.

Mark Obert-Thorn



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PASC 483

Producer and Audio
Restoration Engineer
Mark Obert-Thorn

Pitch stabilisation
Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based
on a photograph of
Leopold Stokowski

Total duration: 74:03

1 Outline of Themes from Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 (4:22)

Recorded 30 April 1927 in the Victor Studios, Camden, New Jersey
Matrix no.: CVE 38605-2. First issued on Victor 6669 in album M-17

BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92

2 1st Mvt. - Poco sostenuto; Vivace (11:22)

3 2nd Mvt. - Allegretto (10:38)

4 3rd Mvt. - Presto (7:57)

5 4th Mvt. - Allegro con brio (6:41)

Recorded 6, 15 & 25 April 1927 in the Academy of Music, Philadelphia
Matrix nos.: CVE 37470-2, 37474-2, 37475-1, 37476-2, 37477-2, 37478-2, 37479-2, 37480-2, 37481-2 & 37482-1
First issued on Victor 6670 through 6674 in album M-17

SCHUBERT Symphony No. 8 in B minor, D759 "Unfinished"

6 1st Mvt. - Allegro moderato (10:33)

7 2nd Mvt. - Andante con moto (12:00)

Recorded 28 & 30 April 1927 in the Academy of Music, Philadelphia
Matrix nos.: CVE 29052-6, 29053-6, 29054-6, 29055-6, 29056-7 & 29057-7
First issued on Victor 6663 through 6665 in album M-16

8 **SCHUBERT** (orch. Stokowski) Moment Musicale No. 3 in F minor, D780 (2:09)

Recorded 6 April 1927 in the Academy of Music, Philadelphia
Matrix no.: BVE 25941-8. First issued on Victor 1312-A

SCHUBERT Rosamunde, D797

9 Ballet Music No. 2 (issued version) (3:41)

Recorded 11 October 1927 in the Academy of Music, Philadelphia
Matrix no.: BVE 37497-1. First issued on Victor 1312-B

10 Ballet Music No. 2 (unissued longer version) (4:40)

Recorded 2 May 1927 in the Academy of Music, Philadelphia
Matrix no.: CVE 37497-2. Unissued on 78 rpm

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The Philadelphia Orchestra *Leopold Stokowski*

