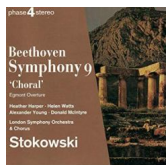


Beethoven - Symphony No. 9 'Choral' (Stokowski) [1997]

Wpisany przez bluesever
Sobota, 06 Kwiecień 2019 12:04 -

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1. *Egmont Overture Op. 84* 8:51 Recorded 17/II/1973 Symphony No. 9 Op.125 2. *I. Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso* 15:04 3. *II. Molto vivace* 4. *III. Allegro molto a cantabile* 5. *IV. Finale: Presto - Allegro ma non troppo - Allegro assai* 26:09

Recorded on 20,21/IX/1967 at Kingsway Hall, London Altos – Helen Watts Bass – Donald McIntyre Soprano – Heather Harper Tenor – Alexander Young New Philharmonia Orchestra London Symphony Orchestra & Chorus Leopold Stokowski - conductor

There's nothing Phase 4 about this Beethoven Ninth from 1967 until we get to the close-miked vocal parts, which is fortunate since at its worst Phase 4 metastasized orchestras into garish carnivals. The London Sym. is placed a bit away from the listener, and balances are natural.

Earlier in his career Stokowski wasn't admired for his push-and-pull ways in Beethoven, but here at age 85 he is vigorous and respectful, with a minimum of rhythmic distortion. Such rubato as there is adds to the propulsive excitement of the reading. At 67+ min. it's no old man's reading. Stokowski's mastery over line and balance is very much intact. No doubt he is the oldest conductor to record a Beethoven Ninth, perhaps the oldest to conduct it, period.

The first movement is direct, favoring forward motion over mystery or dynamic contrast. The scherzo is a real high point, for once, with Stokowski building climaxes and moding phrases (to the horror of literalists) that sustain interest every moment. The Adagio is just as successful, fairly fast and powerful, with no dawdling or fussy underlining. Only the most profoundly reflective readings surpass this one. Five stars so far.

Stokowski's besetting temptation in old age was to try and sound too forceful, as if untouched

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by the years. The finale begins a bit punchy, but the famous tune is allowed to sing out (Stokowski pulls it around a bit toward the end). Donald McIntyre's solo is magnificent in tone, although he doesn't seem to know what he's singing about. The excellent LSO chorus and the solo quartet are much closer than the orchestra once the body of the finale begins, but all sing very well. The finale is the only movement that falls noticeably short because of garish miking; perhaps needing to retain control over such huge forces, Stokowski turns a bit slow and cautious.

Even so, I wonder if experienced listeners wouldn't find this a great performance up to that point? The filler is an Egmont Over. from six years later, which the nonagenarian Stokowski bludgeons with a blunt instrument--real Phase 4 stuff at last! ---Santa Fe Listener, amazon.com

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