

for the European Union and the Council of Europe.

This leaves Monteux's stirring and virile accounts of the overtures *Egmont* (music for Goethe's narrative about the life and heroism of a sixteenth-century Dutch nobleman, the Count of Egmont, 1808–10), *Fidelio* (1814, the last and most concise overture for the opera of the same name) and *König Stephan* (1811, King Stephen I being the founder of the kingdom of Hungary in the year 1000).

As with the symphonies, each performance subscribes to key qualities that are typical of Monteux's Beethoven conducting style: respect for the spirit of the score, directness of expression, exceptionally well-drilled playing and a sense of untainted idealism that lay at the very heart of the composer's vision. Other conductors may have offered a more personalised take on the music, but none made it more universal or more human.

Rob Cowan

Recording Producers: John Culshaw (Nos. 2, 6, *Fidelio*, *König Stephan*); John Culshaw, Erik Smith (Nos. 1, 3: Wiener Philharmoniker, 4, 5, 7, *Egmont*); Christopher Raeburn, John Culshaw (No. 8); Kurt List, Peter Higgins (No. 9: performance and rehearsal, La Marseillaise); Jaap van Ginneken (No. 3: Concertgebouworkest)

Balance Engineers: Gordon Parry, James Brown (Nos. 3: Wiener Philharmoniker, 6, 8); Kenneth Wilkinson (Nos. 2, 4, *Fidelio*, *König Stephan*); Ken Cress, Alan Reeve (Nos. 5, 7, *Egmont*); James Brown (No. 1); Adolf Enz, Raymond Füglistaler (No. 9: performance and rehearsal, La Marseillaise); Henk Jansen, Co Witteveen (No. 3: Concertgebouworkest)

Recording Location: Kingsway Hall, London, UK, 15–16 October 1959 (No. 4), 9–10 May 1960 (No. 2, *Fidelio*, *König Stephan*), 23–27 May 1961 (Nos. 5, 7, *Egmont*); Sofiensaal, Vienna, Austria, 2–3 December 1957 (No. 3: Wiener Philharmoniker), 29–31 October 1958 (No. 6), 15 & 22 April 1959 (No. 8), 20–24 April 1960 (No. 1); Walthamstow Assembly Hall, London, UK, 11–13 & 18 June 1962 (No. 9: performance and rehearsal, La Marseillaise); Grote Zaal, Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 1–3 July 1962 (No. 3: Concertgebouworkest)

Remastering Engineer: Chris Bernauer

Cover Photograph: Pierre Monteux (photo: © Decca / Fritz Gerritsen)

Eloquence Series Producer: Cyrus Meher-Homji

Art Direction: www.OdysseyMedia.com.au

October 1959 London Symphony Orchestra recording Monteux allows the 'darkness to light' transition from Adagio to Allegro vivace to work its magic without affectation, the Allegro taken at a moderate pace, the pulsing Adagio slow movement unfolding like a song without words, the scherzo rightly (and ruggedly) boisterous, and the finale nearer the fast metronome directive than the seemingly contradictory marking of 'Allegro ma non troppo'. Interestingly on his NDR Symphony Orchestra Concert Hall recording from 1960 Monteux omits the first and last movement repeats. Here he includes them both.

Beethoven's magnificently built Fifth Symphony (1807–08) meets Monteux's positive temperament head-on, the opening 'fate-knocking-at-the-door' motive taken more broadly than the Allegro con brio that launches from it. In May 1961 Monteux had keyed up his London Symphony players, who were truly up for a performance that has plenty of bite, though Monteux makes an unexpected stylistic detour by indulging a marked *rallentando* at the start of the development section – effective it's true but a gestural remnant from an earlier era. Note the elegance at the start of the Andante con

moto slow movement and the gruff, close-set basses at the trio section of the scherzo, always a specialty with the LSO at this period. The finale is joyous and light on its feet, though it's a shame that at this stage in the recording game conductors rarely observed the finale repeat to balance the repeat in the first movement. It makes so much musical sense.

Monteux's Vienna Philharmonic October 1958 account of Beethoven's most overtly pictorial symphony, the *Pastoral* (1808) is both genial and exhilarating, the opening 'pleasant, cheerful feelings awakened on arrival in the countryside' breezy but relatively relaxed, the 'scene by the brook' warmly mobile, the 'merry gathering of country folk' infused with a feeling for the dance, the storm, taut, swift and with vivid reportage of Beethoven's orchestrated thunderclaps (the quivering strings almost as dramatic as the thwacking timps). It would be difficult to imagine a gentler opening to the comforting 'Shepherd's Song', nor a more celebratory course once the singing really starts.

Although the powerful Seventh Symphony (1811–12), famously characterised by Wagner as 'the apotheosis of the dance', has

always inspired enthusiasm among listeners, Beethoven himself is said to have preferred the less overtly dramatic Eighth (1812), his 'little one' as he called it. In the Seventh Symphony (LSO, May 1961), after a relatively broad introduction, Monteux cues a bright and boisterous Vivace with some prominent work from the horns. The second movement is distinguished by its nobility and warmth, the scherzo by a spacious trio, whereas the finale is notable for its energy and flexibility.

For the extrovert first movement of the Eighth (Vienna, April 1959), Monteux avoids the slamming *sforzandi* favoured by so many, preferring instead relatively gentle emphases. For the light and lively second movement, apparently an affectionate parody of the metronome, which had only recently been invented (or more accurately, improved) by Beethoven's friend Johann Maelzel, Monteux actually observes Beethoven's fast metronome marking, maybe pointing more to the device itself than to Beethoven's use of it. The texturally warm Menuetto and light-footed Finale confirm the performance's feel-good demeanour.

Beethoven's last orchestral work, his Ninth Symphony (1823–4), appends a life-affirming

and variegated choral finale – here graced by an especially distinguished vocal quartet – to its three purely instrumental movements. The symphony's jagged opening motive rides on a driven sequence of semiquavers which some treat more as a shimmering *tremolo*, but that in Monteux's hands gains in clarity and rhythmic profile so that when they reappear later on in the movement they remain part of the musical argument. Elsewhere Monteux's reading (the sole Westminster recording in the series, made in London in June 1962) treads a middle course, whether in the galumphing scherzo, the serene theme-and-variations slow movement or the Finale itself.

The rehearsal fragments that are also included are fascinating, Monteux comparing aspects of the Adagio to 'a new' Beethoven Violin Concerto, while employing his quietly authoritative manner to a variety of small but significant details, especially regarding articulation and dynamics. In context, the playing of the revolutionary *La Marseillaise* (1792), the first example of the 'European march' in the style of an anthem, would surely have delighted Beethoven, just as it reminds us that the principal theme from the Ninth's 'Ode to Joy' Finale is the anthem

had a way with the Second (a slightly later recording with the NDR Symphony is almost as good, though not technically), a high-energy take – note the fiercely scrubbing strings at 3'09 into the first movement or the heroic assertiveness of the movement's coda. The dramatic *Larghetto* is among Beethoven's finest slow movements of the period, and Monteux is duly appreciative of its beauty, and in the powerful *Scherzo* he and his players relish the quick-witted exchanges between the various instrumental groups. The finale bristles with energy.

Although Beethoven adds but a third horn to the orchestra he'd been using for his first two symphonies, his Third (1804), is on an altogether bigger scale. Beethoven had originally thought of dedicating it to Napoleon Bonaparte. The biographer Maynard Solomon relates that Beethoven admired the ideals of the French Revolution, and viewed Napoleon as their embodiment. In the autumn the composer began to have second thoughts about that dedication, though he still gave the work the title of 'Bonaparte'. According to Beethoven's pupil and assistant, Ferdinand Ries, when Napoleon proclaimed himself Emperor of the French in May 1804, Beethoven became disgusted,

took hold of the score's title-page and tore it up in rage.

At this point it is maybe worth mentioning the musically significant question of first movement exposition repeats. Monteux observes them only in symphonies Nos. 1, 4, 5, 6 and 8. Recordings of the *Eroica* with its repeat intact were always rare, starting with Mengelberg with the New York Philharmonic Symphony in 1930 (though not on his later versions with the Concertgebouw Orchestra). Neither of the two most iconic twentieth century Beethovenians, Wilhelm Furtwängler and Toscanini, played the repeat, at least not on the recordings – 'live' or 'studio' – that have come down to us. I make the point because nowadays its inclusion is deemed a matter of structural necessity. Monteux's December 1957 Vienna Philharmonic recording is notable for its taut first movement development section, its frequent delicacy and its expert balancing, especially towards the end of the *Marcia funèbre*, a reading that while far from histrionic captures the movement's full measure of gravitas. The strings project with cut-glass clarity in the *Scherzo* (no slowing for the trio this time), and the theme and variations finale is a model of well-proportioned interpretation. Although



Pierre Monteux conducting the Concertgebouw Orchestra

differing marginally in terms of tempo here or there the sonically superior but somewhat mellower sounding Concertgebouw *Eroica* is conceptually similar, a vital, clear-headed reading that has the measure of Beethoven's elevated vision.

Schumann famously likened the Fourth

Symphony (1806) to 'a slender Greek maiden between two Norse giants', the 'giants' being the *Eroica* and Fifth Symphonies. Interesting aspects of this work include a scherzo with a trio that makes two appearances and a mysterious *Adagio* introduction that some (though not me) have likened to a Haydnesque joke (i.e. 'only kidding'). On his

a student, Monteux played in the orchestra of the Folies Bergère and later said to George Gershwin that his rhythmic sense was formed during the experience of playing popular dance music there, rhythm being a key aspect of his mature Beethoven style.

In 1893 Monteux was successful in the competition for the chair of first viola of the Concerts Colonne, of which he became assistant conductor and choirmaster the following year. He was also employed on a freelance basis at the Opéra-Comique, where he continued to play from time to time for several years; he led the viola section at the 1902 premiere of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* under the baton of the composer André Messager. In 1896 Monteux graduated from the Conservatoire, sharing first prize for violin with Thibaud but it was during that same year that he was called up for military service, describing himself as 'the most pitifully inadequate soldier that the 132nd Infantry had ever seen'.

Pierre Monteux is most widely celebrated for his relationship to the music of Stravinsky, especially the ballets *Petrushka* and *Le sacre du printemps*, both of which he premiered (in 1911 and 1913 respectively), the latter

in the midst of a riot, though largely due to Monteux the music was salvaged from scandal and subsequently celebrated. During the time of the Great War Monteux was at New York's Metropolitan Opera conducting French repertoire with such singers as Enrico Caruso, Geraldine Farrar, Louise Homer and Giovanni Martinelli. In 1919 he was appointed chief conductor of the Boston Symphony, where he introduced many new compositions. Five years later he began a long association with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra working alongside the great Willem Mengelberg.

From 1929 Monteux conducted the Orchestre Symphonique de Paris, founded the previous year. His next port of call was San Francisco where in addition to taking over the Symphony Orchestra (and making some rather cavernous-sounding recordings with them) he established the Pierre Monteux School for conductors and orchestral musicians, held each summer at his home in Hancock, Maine from 1943 onwards. He appeared as guest conductor with many orchestras but he specially adored – and was adored by – British orchestras. He worked with the Royal Philharmonic Society Orchestra (as well as Sir Thomas Beecham's later Royal

Philharmonic), the Hallé, the BBC Symphony and, most famously, the London Symphony Orchestra, who in 1961 offered him the post of principal conductor (he was 86 at the time) which he accepted, on condition that he had a contract for 25 years, with an option of renewal.

The music and its interpreter

The above notes barely scratch the surface of a remarkable life, let alone touch on the subject of Monteux's many recordings. Far be it for me to pre-empt critical reactions to this set, but I thought that a few personal remarks, on the performances as well as on the music, might be of some use. Bear in mind too that Monteux's Beethoven symphony cycle, which on LP shared its contents between three separate labels (RCA, Decca and Westminster) was roughly contemporary with differing and often inspired interpretations under the likes of Otto Klemperer, Herbert von Karajan, Hermann Scherchen, Rene Leibowitz, Ernest Ansermet, Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt and others. However, given the evidence reissued here I doubt that many would deny that even in such hallowed company, Monteux holds his own.

The light-textured First Symphony, based

in part on an earlier draft, was composed between 1799 and 1800 and cites, by inference, Mozart and Haydn as its models. Monteux's Vienna Philharmonic performance from April 1960 opens to a genial, affectionate introduction before setting out on a lively but unforced Allegro con brio. By 2'07 you're aware of a vital attribute that visits every one of these recordings, namely that Monteux separates his violin desks left and right of the rostrum, which means that because of stereo techniques you can enjoy what was surely intended as antiphonal dialogue. The Andante second movement edges in blithely and in the bracing Menuetto Monteux eases the tempo for the trio (unlike Toscanini). The finale opens to a teasing Adagio, which gains in confidence, phrase by phrase, note by note, before setting out at speed. Monteux gets the point across on a perfect transition.

Many would claim, not without that good reason, that the *Eroica* (Third) Symphony marks Beethoven's biggest leap forwards in symphonic terms but I would cite 1'48 into the slow introduction of the Second (1801–02, here with the London Symphony Orchestra, May 1960), a fist-slamming announcement, 'I've arrived, and make no mistake'. Monteux

A listening privilege

'You may give an excellently played, genuinely felt performance of a movement, but because the engineer is not satisfied because there is some rustling at one point, so you do it again and this time something else goes wrong. By the time you get a "perfect" take of the recording the players are bored, the conductor is bored, and the performance is lifeless and boring. ... I detest all my own records.' So claimed the French-born American conductor Pierre Monteux (1875–1964) in an article published in *The Times* in 1959. But hold on: Monteux, bored? If there's one quality that leaps out at you from these Beethoven recordings, or the vast majority of them, it's an unflagging spontaneity borne of a genuine love of the music. Had Monteux enjoyed the opportunity to hear these recordings as they sound in their newest incarnation, I doubt that he would have 'detested' them.

Pierre Monteux, the father of six children, displayed a zest for living that, aside from fitful signs of frailty in his last years, lasted virtually until the day he died. As Beethoven celebrated life, so did Monteux, his performances of the symphonies and various overtures blueprints of both the letter and

the spirit, though the scholarly imperatives characteristic of the period performance school had yet to make waves among Beethoven interpreters. David Zinman, who worked with Monteux from 1958 to 1962, combines his master's unique blend of enlivened straightforwardness with a reading of the latest edited *Urtexts*, but Monteux's Beethoven symphony recordings – and there are a good deal more than are collected on these six CDs, many of them 'live' – predate the most fastidious textual research.

Regarding the first movement of Beethoven's *Eroica* (Third) Symphony, the great and highly influential Italian conductor Arturo Toscanini is known to have said, 'to some it is Napoleon, to some it is a philosophical struggle, to me it is *allegro con brio*'. The point is that, modest though Toscanini was as an artist, he was too much the magnetic superpower not to emerge from his performances as the charismatic man that he was, whereas Monteux really did become *Allegro con brio*. Listening to this cycle you soon forget about everything but that irrepressible life force that was Ludwig van Beethoven.

Honing his skills among the greats

Monteux was born in Paris, the third son of



Pierre Monteux and the London Symphony Orchestra in the Royal Festival Hall, London

a shoemaker. His ancestors included at least one Rabbi (though Pierre's immediate family wasn't in the least religious). He was just nine years old when he was admitted to the Conservatoire de Paris, studying violin, his fellow pupils including such future luminaries as George Enescu, Carl Flesch, Fritz Kreisler and Jacques Thibaud. At the age of twelve,

Monteux organised and conducted a small orchestra of Conservatoire students to accompany the pianist Alfred Cortot in performances of concertos in and around Paris. He attended the world premiere of César Franck's *Symphony* (a work that he would later record to magnificent effect) in February 1889. From 1889 to 1892, while still

CD 3

71'07

Symphony No. 4 in B flat major, Op. 60

[1]	I Adagio – Allegro vivace	12'38
[2]	II Adagio	9'17
[3]	III Allegro vivace	5'43
[4]	IV Allegro ma non troppo	6'30

London Symphony Orchestra

Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92

[5]	I Poco sostenuto – Vivace	12'02
[6]	II Allegretto	8'41
[7]	III Presto – Assai meno presto	9'07
[8]	IV Allegro con brio	6'32

London Symphony Orchestra

CD 4

72'36

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67

[1]	I Allegro con brio	7'10
[2]	II Andante con moto	9'16
[3]	III Allegro	5'02
[4]	IV Allegro	8'56

London Symphony Orchestra

Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68 'Pastoral'

[5]	I Erwachen heiterer Empfindungen bei der Ankunft auf dem Lande (Allegro ma non troppo)	12'29
[6]	II Szene am Bach (Andante molto mosso)	11'45
[7]	III Lustiges Zusammensein der Landleute (Allegro)	5'18
[8]	IV Gewitter, Sturm (Allegro)	3'34
[9]	V Hirtengesang. Frohe und dankbare Gefühle nach dem Sturm (Allegretto)	8'57

Wiener Philharmoniker

CD 5

68'32

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

[1]	I Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso	16'17
[2]	II Molto vivace	11'50
[3]	III Adagio molto e cantabile	14'49
[4]	IV Presto – Allegro assai – Recitativo: 'O Freunde, nicht diese Töne!' – Allegro assai	25'31

Elisabeth Söderström, soprano

Regina Resnik, alto

Jon Vickers, tenor

David Ward, bass

London Bach Choir

London Symphony Orchestra

CD 6

75'21

Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125 – Rehearsal

[1]	Rehearsal: first movement	9'11
[2]	Rehearsal: second movement	7'0
[3]	Rehearsal: third movement	9'44

London Symphony Orchestra

CLAUDE JOSEPH ROUGET DE LISLE (1760–1836)

[4] La Marseillaise

1'24

London Symphony Orchestra

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Symphony No. 3 in E flat major, Op. 55 'Eroica'

[5]	I Allegro con brio	14'45
[6]	II Marcia funebre (Adagio assai)	15'24
[7]	III Scherzo (Allegro vivace)	5'35
[8]	IV Finale (Allegro molto)	11'58

Concertgebouworkest

Pierre Monteux

Total timing: 440'27



ELOQUENCE

BEETHOVEN

The Nine Symphonies
Symphony No. 9: rehearsal
Fidelio: Overture
Egmont: Overture
König Stephan: Overture

London Symphony Orchestra
Wiener Philharmoniker
Concertgebouworkest
Pierre Monteux

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

CD 1

Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op. 21

1	I Adagio molto - Allegro con brio	8'57
2	II Andante cantabile con moto	6'04
3	III Menuetto (Allegro molto e vivace)	3'21
4	IV Finale (Adagio - Allegro molto e vivace)	5'33

Wiener Philharmoniker

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 36

5	I Adagio molto - Allegro con brio	9'56
6	II Larghetto	10'57
7	III Scherzo (Allegro)	3'22
8	IV Allegro molto	6'33

9 Fidelio: Overture, Op. 72b

6'25

10 Egmont: Overture, Op. 84

9'03

11 König Stephan: Overture, Op. 117

7'15

London Symphony Orchestra

CD 2

Symphony No. 3 in E flat major, Op. 55 'Eroica'

1	I Allegro con brio	14'44
2	II Marcia funèbre (Adagio assai)	15'01
3	III Scherzo (Allegro vivace)	5'45
4	IV Finale (Allegro molto)	12'26

Wiener Philharmoniker

Symphony No. 8 in F major, Op. 93

5	I Allegro vivace e con brio	9'58
6	II Allegretto scherzando	3'40
7	III Tempo di menuetto	5'01
8	IV Allegro vivace	7'30

Wiener Philharmoniker