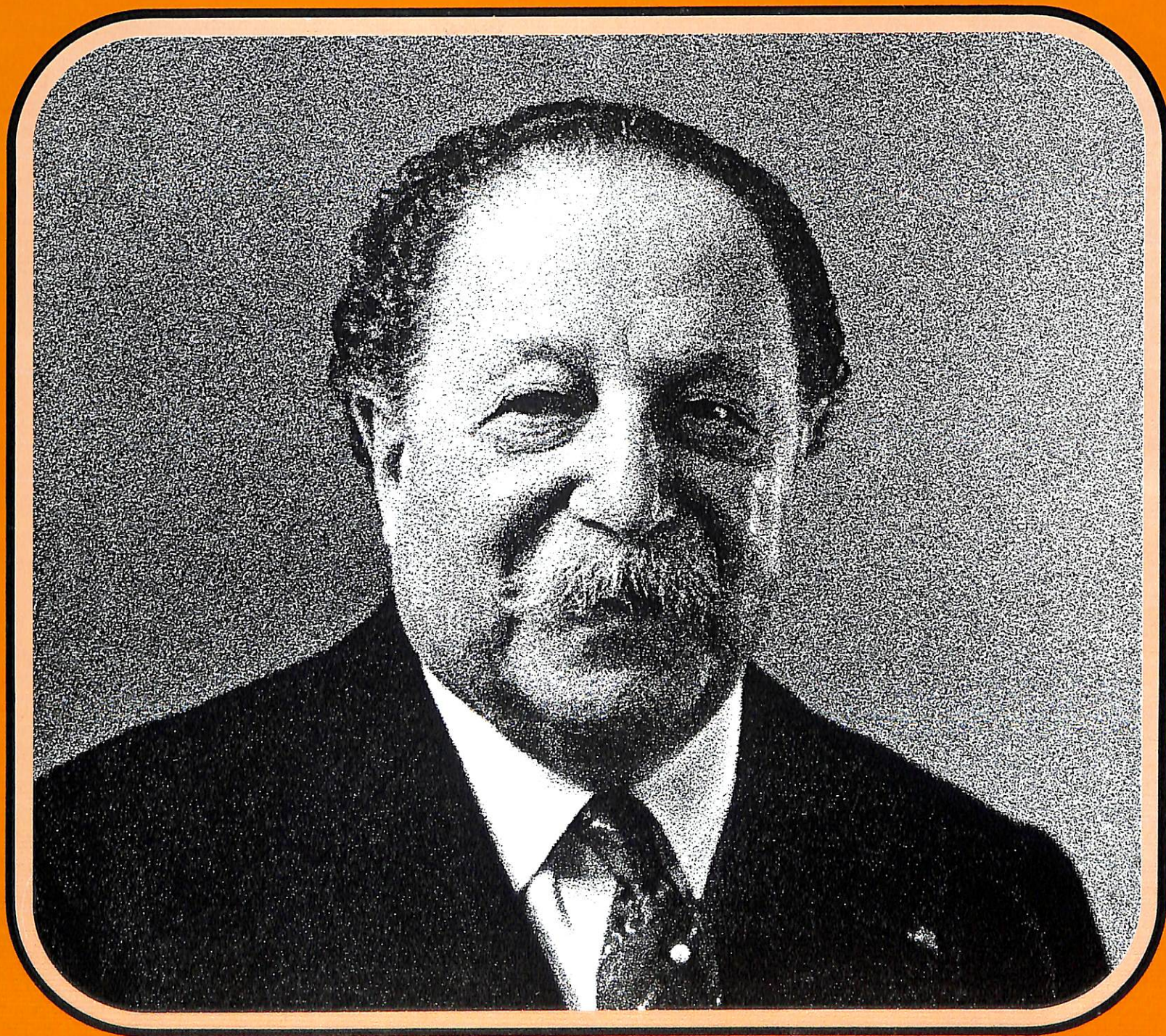


VICS-1102 STEREO

BEETHOVEN | WAGNER  
Symphony No. 4 | Siegfried Idyll

RCA  
VICTROLA

PIERRE MONTEUX  
London Symphony | San Francisco Symphony





Mono VIC-1102  
Stereo VICS-1102

Beethoven—SYMPHONY No. 4 • London Symphony Orchestra  
Wagner—SIEGFRIED IDYLL • San Francisco Symphony Orchestra  
PIERRE MONTEUX conducting



## Two Monteux Performances Never Before Released

It has been noted that in all of his even-numbered symphonies Beethoven was content to seek softer beauties, reserving his defiance, his true depths of passion, for the alternate ones. There may well have been something in his nature which required this alternation, a trait perhaps also accountable for the thematic alternation of virility and gentleness, of the "masculine" and the "feminine" in his scores of this period. For the years 1804-1806 were the years of the colossus first finding his full symphonic strength, and glorying in it, and at the same time the years of the romantic lover, capable of being entirely subdued and subjugated by feminine charm. It may have been some inner law of artistic equilibrium which induced Beethoven, after drafting two movements for his C Minor Symphony (the Fifth) in 1805, to set them aside and devote himself, in 1806, to the gentler contours of the *Symphony in B-Flat*, which, completed in that year, thus became the fourth in number.

Robert Schumann compared this symphony to "a slender Greek maiden between two Norse giants." The Fourth, generally overshadowed by the more imposing stature of the "Eroica" and the Fifth, has not lacked champions. "The character of this score," wrote Berlioz, "is generally lively, nimble, joyous, or of a heavenly sweetness." Thayer, Beethoven's principal biographer, who bestowed his ad-

jectives guardedly, singled out the "placid and serene Fourth Symphony—the most perfect in form of them all"; and Sir George Grove, a more demonstrative enthusiast, found in it something extraordinarily *entraînant*—"a more consistent and attractive whole cannot be. . . . The movements fit in their places like the limbs and features of a lovely statue; and, full of fire and invention as they are, all is subordinated to conciseness, grace, and beauty."

### Wagner Siegfried Idyll

This beautiful piece of music was a birthday gift from Wagner to his wife Cosima. It was written in November 1870 at Tribschen, the lovely villa on Lake Lucerne, where the couple had found a haven from the creditors, prying visitors and gossip-mongers of Munich. Here, in June 1869, a son had been born, named Siegfried after the hero of the opera Wagner was working on. It was a period of deep serenity and happiness in Wagner's turbulent life, and the music of the *Siegfried Idyll* reflects this.

The first performance was arranged as a surprise for Cosima on Christmas Day, her thirty-third birthday. All the preparations had been carried out in secret. That morning the fifteen musicians tuned in the kitchen of the villa, and then at 7:30 took their places on the staircase with the composer who was to conduct at the top. "As I awoke, my ear caught a sound, which swelled fuller and fuller," wrote Cosima; "no longer could I imagine myself to be dreaming; music was

sounding, and such music!" Cosima cherished the score and was deeply distressed when, in 1878, Wagner felt the time had come to release it for publication. "My secret treasure is becoming common property," she wrote in her diary; "may the joy it will give mankind be commensurate with the sacrifice I am making."

For his thematic material Wagner used the folk song *Schlafe, mein Kind, schlafe ein* (Sleep, my child) and music from the third-act love scene of *Siegfried*. Lawrence Gilman described the *Siegfried Idyll* as "the most beautiful piece of purely symphonic music that Wagner ever wrote. . . . It has not its like in all music for blended loveliness, blitheness, poetic charm, and enamoring tenderness."

PIERRE MONTEUX, who died July 1, 1964, at the age of eighty-nine, was one of the most celebrated and beloved figures in the entire musical world. Renowned as a conductor of the symphonic literature, opera and ballet, he had led virtually every great orchestra both here and abroad. He made his podium debut in 1911; his first visit to the United States, 1916-24, included two seasons with the Metropolitan Opera and five years with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Following a decade of activity in Europe, Monteux returned to America for sixteen years with the San Francisco Symphony. When he left San Francisco in 1952 this tireless conductor began an almost continuous round of guest engagements in Europe and America. In 1961 he became conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, a post he held at the time of his death.

There are certain similarities between RCA "Victrola"® records and paperback reprints of good books. In both instances works of merit are reissued in lower-priced editions.

But the comparison stops there. A paperback is printed in smaller, less readable type on paper inferior to that used in the original. In the case of RCA "Victrola" records, the sound characteristics are exactly the same as those of the original Red Seal editions, and all "Vic-

trola" reissues are those of recent recordings, using late techniques developed by RCA Victor. Furthermore, "Victrola" records use exactly the same high-quality standards as current Red Seal records.

The result is that memorable performances of great masterpieces of music are not only preserved but are also priced for wider distribution, appealing, we hope, to a wider public.

Among the other **VICTROLA**® albums you will enjoy:

Tchaikovsky: Swan Lake (Excerpts) Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden/Jean Morel . . . . .VIC/VICS-1002  
Prokofiev: Concerto No. 3 • Classical Symphony Gary Graffman/San Francisco Symphony/ Enrique Jorda . . . . .VIC/VICS-1105  
Lehár: "The Merry Widow" and Other Wonderful Waltzes London Proms Symphony/Robert Sharples . . . . .VIC/VICS-1106  
Beethoven: Symphony No. 9 ("Choral") • Fidelio, Leonore No. 3, Coriolan Overtures Leontyne Price, Maureen Forrester, David Pelleri, Giorgio Tozzi; Boston Symphony/Charles Munch . . . . .VIC/VICS-6003

0129