

STEREO



WST 234



BEETHOVEN: NINTH SYMPHONY OP. 125

ELIZABETH SOEDERSTROEM, soprano • REGINA RESNIK, contralto

JON VICKERS, tenor • DAVID WARD, bass

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA • LONDON BACH CHOIR

A **PIERRE MONTEUX** DOCUMENTARY



Monteux the Man

It is very difficult for one in my position to look upon Monteux the man and artist in a purely objective manner. Therefore, I think readers will understand my choosing to write on Monteux the man as I conceive his relationship to the artist. It is certainly the man I have known and watched in his private and public aspects throughout forty long years which is more ingrained in my heart and mind.

To many people, especially his pupils, he is considered a sort of god. I hope I will be pardoned for declaring that I, also, have had this thought at times, but have also had to concede that, like other earth-gods, his feet most thankfully have acquired quite a bit of clay—because Monteux is a man of the people, descendant of an ancient family from sunny Provence in southern France, a man of simplicity with the uncomplicated nature of the French peasant artisan. Like the perfect artisan, he is not one to intellectualize music, but draws upon his profound natural instincts for perfect form and sonority, and in the final analysis to arrive at a conclusive comprehension of the composer's desires and of his own aims in regard to these desires, which is the thing always paramount in his exposition of the creator's composition. In other words, a complete respect for his place in Music, which he considers the golden link between composer and listener.

His mother, Clemence Monteux, was a reputed teacher of piano, and as a child he lived with the sound of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and other music of the romantic epoch in his small ears. Then came the violin and, as first prize from the National Conservatory of France and the first violist of France (if not of Europe), he lived for years in chamber music. An avowed quartetist, he played with Sarasate, Eugene Ysaye, Jacques Thibaud, Grieg and many of the famous artists of the *fin de siècle*.

Entering the Colonne Orchestra of Paris at the age of eighteen as first violist, he had the invaluable experience of playing under the direction of such conductors as Hans Richter, Felix Motl, Arthur Nikisch, Gustave Mahler, Felix Weingartner and many other virtuosi of the baton.

His long career in Music has been an exceptionally full one. As a conductor, he has presided over café-concerts,

music de scène, operetta, opera, ballet and symphony concerts. All these different forms have seen his baton used to good effect. No matter the nature of the music at hand, he has always given it his very best care.

Much of his life has been study. At home we are accustomed to the closed door and know that behind it the master of the house is deep within his scores. I have known him to so bury himself for twelve and fourteen hours at a stretch, only stopping at my insistence for a sandwich and coffee. Every measure and every note in a score are familiar to him—indeed, they are a part of him. The orchestra, any orchestra, becomes truly his *chez lui*. Seventy-one years spent either as a part of the ensemble or as its leader have given him an insight and comprehension of orchestral requirement which amazes all musicians.

Raised on the so-called Classic repertoire, he has an adoration for Brahms and Beethoven which knows no bounds. At his school for conductors on our estate at Hancock, Maine, the foundation of the orchestral repertoire is the basis of his teaching. Last summer I heard him ask an aspiring young conductor, "Why do you choose to conduct this Tragic Overture of Brahms, young man?" "Because I love it, Maestro" was the reply. Quick as a flash the Maestro answered, "Well, *IT* doesn't love you," then in a softer tone of voice and with a sweet smile, "One does not martyrize the thing one loves, my boy."

And that is the secret seemingly, to love it all from beginning to end—Opus I to Opus (?). To lavish all the love one possesses on the MUSIC which has been his life, for which he lives and cannot do without.

During the recording of this unbelievably beautiful Ninth Symphony, which he first played with the great Richter, we rarely spoke, so deeply involved was he in Beethoven and his demands. It has long been his dream to record this last symphony of the Master, and his happiness this week of arduous record making was so very infectious we all—orchestra, chorus, soloists and engineers—felt his grave elation and were at times a bit in awe of such obviously profound beatitude.

DORIS MONTEUX, London 1962



DORIS GERALD MONTEUX (Mme. Pierre Monteux) is a native of Maine, where members of her family have lived in Hancock County since before Revolutionary times. She studied voice at the New England Conservatory and in Paris, and has sung with the Boston Opera

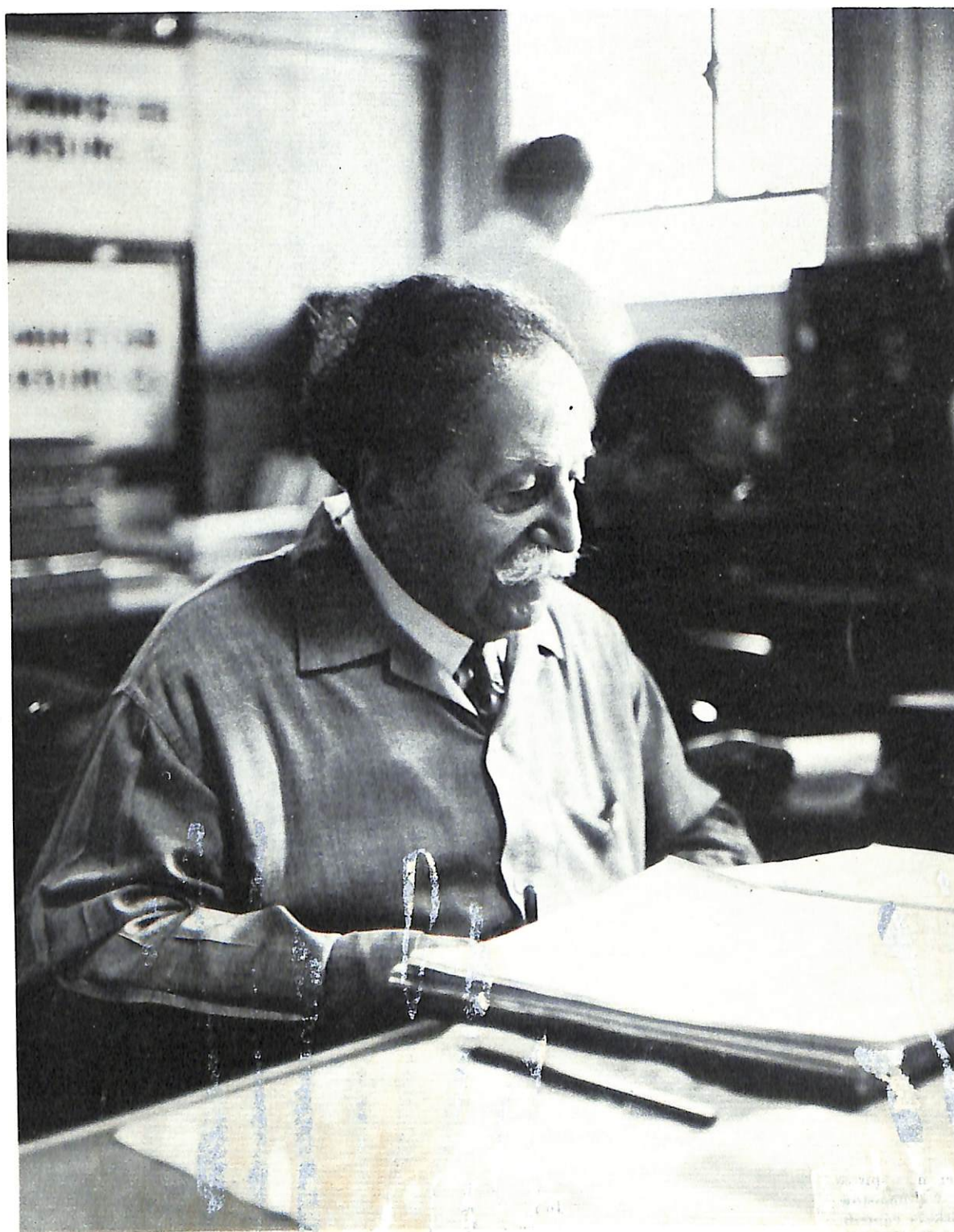
Company and in concerts. Mme. Monteux's background as a poet and writer was of enormous help as the ghostwriter of the book "Everyone Is Someone," authorship of which is credited to Fifi Monteux, the Monteux miniature French poodle and friend of long

standing. Mistress of "The Domain of the Great Pine" in Hancock, she is the Maestro's "right hand" in practically everything and speaks of her husband with more authority than anyone else.

Beethoven: Ninth Symphony

STEREOPHONIC WST-234
MONOPHONIC XWN-2234

Pierre Monteux



At 87, Maestro Monteux shows no sign of placing ritard on the musical activities which have for half a century made him one of the most admired, respected and beloved conductors in the world. At his early studies at the Paris Conservatory he was awarded a First Prize in violin, but began his music career as a viola player. He has shone with particular refulgence in every realm of orchestral conducting, whether it be symphonic, ballet or opera, and has been conductor of the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam and every other great orchestra in Europe and America, 108 in all. In the world of the ballet, as conductor of Sergei Diaghileff's Ballet Russe, he led the premiere of Stravinsky's "Le Sacre du Printemps" at the Theatre des Champs-Elysées in 1913 when it provoked a unprecedented riot. As a symphony conductor he has put his authoritative hands over the London Symphony which he rebuilt between 1919 and 1924, after its time demoralization. The San Francisco Symphony enjoyed its finest hours under Monteux. He was the stand for the Metropolitan Opera's 1918 opening which fell on November 11, 1918. On that occasion he led Caruso and Louise Homer and the entire audience in singing "The Star Spangled Banner," "La Marseillaise," and every other appropriate national anthem. The French anthem, a "natural" for the Maestro, receives its first recording by him, in the form of an impromptu performance along with the rehearsal of Beethoven's Ninth on Side 4 of this album. Pierre Monteux, whose repertoire is as broad as the literature for orchestra, and whose knowledge is as profound, today holds the title of Conductor for Life of the London Symphony, an honor he accepted in his 85th year.

