LSC-2644 STEREO

Beethoven / "Eroica" Symphony

Boston Symphony Orchestra / Erich Leinsdorf

The Architecture of Orchestra

Beethoven—SYMPHONY No. 3 ("Eroica") Mono LM-2644
Boston Symphony Orchestra • Erich Leinsdorf, Music Director Stereo LSC-2644
Produced by Richard Mohr • Recording Engineer: Lewis Layton

A Note About the Album Cover:
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BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

"The Eroica, in my belief, is among the three or four greatest masterpieces of the classic repertoire. Its movements are four great structures—like all of Beethoven, entirely positive. They are grand statements. Beethoven always leads you to a positive conclusion."

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S. declared Erich Leinsdorf as we sat in the conductor's room at Symphony Hall.

"I think the title *Eroica*" continued Leinsdorf, "has misled people over the years, and I wish the very word 'Eroica' would disappear. But I know it is too late. The concept of the word, I fear, leads people to think that you should hang away with the tried theme of the first movement—especially when the trumpets carry it.

"I do believe that in performing classic works one should attempt to project oneself backward in time to when the work was new and imagine what effect it had then. The *Eroica* must have been very daring in 1804. There is a feeling quality in Beethoven that should never be lost. But I certainly do not believe in 'underplaying' the *Eroica*.

"I follow Felix Weingartner's theory that today, in performing Beethoven's orchestral music, certain instrumental doublings should be undertaken. I believe in doubling in the polka where it is noticeable, beyond that it is wrong. These doublings should be done to balance the number of strings and today, and because certain notes were not available in some of the wind instruments of Beethoven's day. In this Symphony, the woodwinds ought to be doubled frequently, the horns seldom and the trumpets not at all.

"In the tempo Beethoven's metronome marings are quite unreliable and cannot be used. The metronome of his day was not the perfected instrument it is now. Those markings are simply impossible in some movements.

"There are different ways of playing the *Allegro* notes that crescendo the double-bass part at the beginning of the funeral march," acknowledged Leinsdorf. "Some like them to begin exactly upon the beat. I prefer that the basses begin the *Allegro* notes just as the first violins play their *Allegro* notes. That brings the quarter note C of the basses in right on the beat of the measure."

In the first and fourth movements of the *Eroica*, Leinsdorf admits to no extra-musical thoughts. But he will smile mischievously, and say that the C minor episode of the funeral march makes him think of the line "Verses de mauvais musiciens" of Gide? (Nay you make a transition from Attah to 1811 in the Roman Catholic Mass. The burning horns in the title of the scherzo affect him as "so romantic that their exuberance should affect the whole scherzo," and he lets the tempo of the trio must be moderate.

The story of the *Eroica*

This heroic work was Beethoven's own favorite among his symphonies, as Christian Kalkbrenner, the poet, claims the composer told him over dinner in 1815. Composed in 1803-04, the *Eroica* was first performed at a private concert given at Prince Lobkowitz' palace in Vienna in December 1804. The public first heard the symphony in April 1805.

Here is the story of the angrily retracted dedication of the Symphony, inseparable from any account of the *Eroica*, as told by Beethoven's pious pupil, Ferdinand Ries, and recounted by Thayer in his definitive biography of the composer:

"In this symphony Beethoven had Bonaparte in his mind, but as he was often by was First Consul, Beethoven entertained him greatly at the time and thought him to the greatest Roman consuls. I is still an account of his more intimate friends are a copy of the score bring upon his table with the word 'Bonaparte' at the thirteen top of the title page and at the extreme bottom 'Luigi van Bonaparte,' but not another word. Whether, and with what the space between was to be filled out, I do not know. I was the first to bring him the intelligence that Bonaparte had proclaimed himself emperor, whereupon he flew into a rage and cried out: 'So he, too, nothing more than an ordinary human being! Now, he, too, will trample on all the rights of man and indulge only his ambition. He will rank himself above all others, become a tyrant!' Beethoven wrote to the title, took hold of the title-page by the top, tore it in two and threw it on the floor. The first page was rewritten and only then did the symphony receive the title 'Sinfonia eroica.'"

This interview with Mr. Leinsdorf was written by the late Lucie Dwyer, long-time musicologist for The Boston Globe.

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SIDE 2
STEREO DYNAGROOVE