Phil's Classical Reviews

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Beethoven: Triple Concerto, Piano Concerto No. 3
Lars Vogt, Christian Tetzlaff, Tanya Tetzlaff, Royal Northern Sinfonia of England (Ondine)

I've been very high on this trio of German performers in recent years, never more than in the present offering of Beethoven's Triple Concerto for Piano, Violin, and Cello in C major, Op. 56. Having frequently performed together, they are all particularly well-adept in this work which has features of both concerto and chamber music. Violinist Christian and cellist Tanja Tetzlaff are in fact brother and sister, and pianist Lars Vogt, who adds the duties of a conductor in both the major works on this program, has often played duo repertoire with both. That's all to the good because the Triple Concerto requires the smooth integration of all three soloists, plus the orchestra as a fourth partner, in a work where give-and-take is essential.

Ever hear *any other* triple concerto? Probably not, for the good reason that the form makes extreme demands on an exquisite coordination and balance of voices. The violin must never dominate the softer voice of the cello, and neither instrument must be drowned out by the piano. (Beethoven compensates so well in this regard that the cello, played here by Tanja Tetzlaff with supreme elegance and warmth, is given some of the very best passages in the entire work.) Consider the fact that a triple concerto, by its nature, requires that each soloist have a crack at the opening-movement exposition, and we need not wonder that this opening Allegro, whose theme swings in gaily like a carousel-ride, is by far the longest movement in the whole work at 17 minutes. The mutual rapport of the soloists, plus superb timing and pacing, ensure that there are no tedious stretches here.

In fact, the Triple Concerto, whatever challenges it poses for the performers, is a remarkably easy work for listeners to fall in love with. The Largo benefits, in particular, from the lovely interplay of cello and violin. It seems all-too brief until we realize, with the heightened tension of the string passage at the very end, that it really functions as a prelude to the rousing finale, Rondo

Schubert: Schwanengesang
Roman Trekel, tenor; Oliver Pohl, piano
(Oehms Classics)

Roman Trekel, a baritone with a range that reaches down into the bass register and possesses a smooth enough legato to make him effective as a lieder artist as well as opera singer, joins fellow Berliner, pianist Oliver Pohl, in thrilling performances of Franz Schubert's posthumous lieder collection, Schwanengesang. More than just merely compelling, there are moments, especially in the first half of the collection of twenty songs, that are positively frightening in their dramatic intensity, and these artists know well how to interpret this element in Schubert.

The title *Schwanengesang* (Swan Song) derives from the folk belief that the swan would sing a mournful song in anticipation of its own death. In German, as also in its English equivalent, it infers a farewell or a final artistic achievement, particularly one that sums up what a person's life and career have stood for. In that sense, the appellation "Swan Song" is quite appropriate, for these songs intensify the previous meditations on mortality, amounting at times to an actual death wish, that we discover in the song cycles *Winterreise* (Winter Journey) and *Die Schöne Müllerin* (The Pretty Miller-Maid) of the pitiably short-lived Schubert (1797-1828).

Opposed to the earlier productions, *Schwanengesang* is not a lieder cycle in the usual sense, as it does not relate a continuing story by one author. All but one of the poems in the 1829 publication of Swan Song are by Ludwig Rellstab or Heinrich Heine, significantly better poets than the Wilhelm Müller of the earlier cycles. One consequence of this is that we are spared the occasional banality of Müller's heroes, the self-pitying Wanderer and the lovesick Miller who drowns himself in despair of the love of a fickle girl. You can do a lot more with many of the poems in *Schwanengesang*, and Schubert poured some of his very best writing into them.

In this recital, Trekel and Pohl have included six songs that were added to the original fourteen after the first

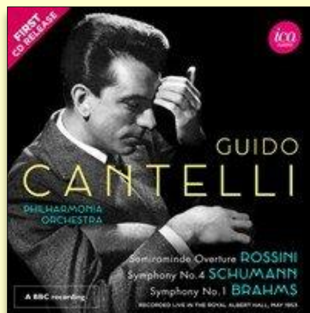
alla Polacca (in the manner of a Polish dance) that concludes the works with irresistible momentum and higher spirits than sedate concertgoers could possibly stand!

In the course of an interview in the booklet notes, pianist and conductor Lars Vogt describes Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37, as “full of breakthroughs,” a work in which the mood of tragedy and fate in the opening movement is worked through, culminating in a final modulation to C major and a mood of “victory radiant with joy” that really makes it unique, even among Beethoven’s five concertos. Vogt also observes that Beethoven displays “an incredible lot of humor” in this work, and the present performance brings *that* out, too.

This is a real “symphonic” concerto in which the roles of piano and orchestra are closely integrated while preserving their own character. It shows startling dramatic parallels with Mozart’s Concerto No. 24 in C minor, K491, even alluding to the Mozart in several places, although Beethoven’s development is uniquely his own. The slow movement, a Largo in 3/8 time and in the remote key of E major, must have startled Beethoven’s contemporaries with the naked directness of its emotion expression (it can still astonish us today). The finale, an Allegro in rondo form, combines the seemingly incompatible elements of intense drama and humor, an incongruity that Vogt, as both performer and conductor, puts across very plausibly here.

publication. They include settings of Goethe’s *An den Mond* (To the Moon) and *Meeres Stille* (Calm Sea) and also Nikolaus Craigher de Jachelutta’s *Totengrabers Heimweh* (Gravedigger’s Weariness). Coming at the beginning of the recital, these powerful lyrics create a portrait of someone in great distress or sorrow. The full implication of a poem’s title is not always apparent from its English translation. For instance, a becalmed sea (*Meeres Stille*) is not a pleasing prospect to a seafarer, but quite the opposite. And the *Doppelgänger* in Heine’s poem of that title is not merely one’s “double,” but implies a fearful apparition: “Another man stands there, looking up, and rings his hands in agony. I shudder to see his face – The moonlight shows me my own image.”

In these highly nuanced songs, as throughout the collection, Trekel and Pohl work together in an ideal partnership. Few of the songs are strophic (same music in each verse). Most are “through-composed,” changing in various ways as the song develops and deepens in significance. In even as familiar and seemingly innocent a song as *Ständchen* (Serenade) the changes are subtle, making it a thoroughly satisfying experience. And Pohl is very adept at effectively carrying on the mood of a song on the piano after the singer’s part has ended.



Brahms: Symphony No.1 + Schumann: Symphony No.4
Rossini: *Semiramide* Overture – Guido Cantelli
(ICA Classics)

Guido Cantelli: a well-remembered name from the past. He assumed the direction of the NBC Symphony Orchestra after the death of Toscanini. With his verve and his remarkable ability to maintain momentum and build towering climaxes, he was certainly the right man to succeed the Maestro. He showed these same traits earlier in his career in the course of 36 concerts in the United Kingdom, 28 with the Philharmonia Orchestra, heard in the present release which is issued for the first time on CD. The occasion was a concert at the Royal Albert Hall on May 11, 1953.

It’s amazing how little the passage of time has decayed the vibrancy of these recordings. This was repertoire Cantelli conducted on many occasions (38 for Rossini’s

Toscanini 150th Anniversary Steven Richman, Harmonie Ensemble, New York (Bridge Records)

Steve Richman leads his New York-based Harmonie Ensemble in a program commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the birth of Arturo Toscanini (1867-1957) and also the 80th anniversary of the NBC Symphony Orchestra that was specially created for him. Richman honors his subject in the best way possible, by putting together and directing an old-fashioned pops program that the Maestro himself would really have loved.

The first thing you need to understand about Toscanini is that he was, first and foremost, a conductor of opera. When he took his baton from opera house to symphony hall he did not leave his well-honed instincts behind him. Audiences may respond to a work of music primarily in terms of its melody, but the operatic conductor knows that the accompaniment is at least as important, and he

Semiramide Overture, 46 for Brahms' First Symphony) and he knew the contours and the vital elements in the music by heart as well as instinct. He did not program Schumann's Fourth Symphony as often as these, but his gut feeling for the composer's tricky tempo indications – for instance, *Schneller* (faster) at bar 188 in the finale, followed by *Presto* at bar 211, which he interprets as "even faster" – is always right on the money. Cantelli gets the flow of the music, in a work where the movements follow without a break, just right. Schumann's Fourth is unusually concise in its economy, with some indication of cyclic form in the recurrence of the lovely melody played by the violin in the slow movement, *Romanze*, in slightly different form in both Trio sections of the Scherzo. Cantelli uses a version in which that heart-melting melody is assigned to the first violins rather than a solo violin, a decision I do not find as gratifying. Otherwise, we are given a very satisfying performance.

Rossini's *Semiramide* Overture, a perennial Cantelli favorite, is here given a really bracing performance capturing its humor and excitement in equal measure. Brahms' Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68 is taken by Cantelli in a way that emphasizes the cumulative effect of a work in which the overall impact towards which he is building is more important than the individual movements, stunning as they are. Cantelli carefully manages Brahms' variations in tempo, allowing incidents to accumulate as he builds toward the climaxes. In the finale, the shadows of evening seem to descend slowly on the sound of layered strings, giving way to the wonderfully haunting melody in the horns that we will hear in our dreams.

These live recordings capture all the thrill of actual performance They do suffer in some degree from the fact that you do not have the luxury of being able to set recording levels and move equipment around in the way you'd have under studio conditions. There is a certain amount of extraneous sound – the shuffling of musical scores and programs between movements and occasionally a discretely stifled cough (though this *is* a very well-bred English audience) – all of which does not immediately end when the music recommences. That may bother some audiophiles who have a passion for absolute sonic purity. If you can tune out these distractions, which I personally do not find insuperable, I guarantee you will hear some truly great performances.

prepares it accordingly. Toscanini was well aware, for instance, of the importance of keeping his cellos and basses continually employed to the max. Consequently, he doubled the already-ample compliment of five cellos in the opening section of Rossini's William Tell Overture, heard in the present program, in the interest of enhancing its overall sound and momentum.

We hear that solid foundation at the very opening of the program in Verdi's *Aïda* Overture, where it anticipates the intense drama and emotional conflict in the tragic tale of Verdi's heroine. This, by the way, is the overture that was given its world premiere by Toscanini in 1940, rather than the shorter, simpler prelude usually performed with the opera. We find this same looming power of fate in the Suite from Bizet's *Carmen*, which differs in the Toscanini version from the *Carmen* Suite No. 1 we are used to hearing. For one, we are given an imaginative harp cadenza to the Prelude to Act I which serves as a bridge to the poignant Intermezzo. The March and Chorus of the Toreadors that opens Act IV is a rouser if ever there was.

Richman follows Toscanini's lead in presenting a natural, un-sentimentalized account of Tchaikovsky's familiar Nutcracker Suite, Op. 71A, that emphasizes its rhythm, color, and movement, especially in the pieces from the divertissement: Trepak, Arabian Dance, Chinese Dance, Dance of the Mirlitons, and Waltz of the Flowers. The performance of the afore-mentioned William Tell Overture follows Toscanini's observation that it is really "more like a mini-symphony than an overture." The four sections – a *de facto* opening movement, stormy scherzo, warmly felt adagio, and rousing finale – are clearly characterized here, after indications in the Maestro's own score.

The familiar Skaters Waltz by the otherwise unknown Emil Waldteufel is performed in Toscanini's version with its very robust orchestration. We get a good impression of the lively movement in this perennial favorite of ice ballets and figure skaters everywhere.

Liszt: Sonata in B minor + Schumann: Kinderszenen
Joseph-Maurice Weder, piano (MDG Classics) SACD

MDG stands for *Musikproduktion Dabringhaus und Grimm*, which is a small label located in Detmold, Germany. Its goal is to capture vivid, natural-sounding performances made in specially chosen concert halls: "We aim at genuine reproduction with precise depth gradation, original dynamics, and natural tone colors. It is thus that each work attains its musically appropriate spatial dimension."

That being the case, they couldn't have asked for a better artist to record than Joseph-Maurice Weder. The 29 year old Swiss pianist cultivates, among other things, a beautifully centered tone of bell-like clarity that is ideally suited for MDG's audiophile credo. His command of piano technique is so pervasive that he does not make a great issue of it, and so he is free to address the two vastly different works on the present program in purely musical and interpretive terms. And his sense of timing is absolutely flawless, a factor that is particularly important in the case of Liszt's Sonata in B minor.

That this sonata is intended to be played without a break as one continuously evolving whole is, of course, apparent upon first listening. That it has a double function, containing all the elements of sonata-allegro form (exposition, development, lead back, and recapitulation) in a work that is also unified by cyclic form, makes it unique. You always have to know where you are and where you are going in a score of 30+ minutes, which makes it a dangerous work for technically flashy interpretive lightweights. That sense of timing we talked about earlier serves Weder well in this work, in which the emotion builds through stages to an overwhelming climax and then subsides slowly to a soft dying-out in which the dynamics are barely audible, almost more to be perceived in the mind, or rather the imagination, than real. Weder's overall timing of 33:19 is a little on the long side compared with other recordings, but it is the result of carefully considered pauses that allow the work enough space to breathe without losing an iota of its essential tension. There are no longeurs in this account of the Liszt sonata, but a consciousness that looks in both directions and sees it as a unified whole without parallel in the history of music.

By contrast with the Liszt, which is one of music's

"Bach Unlimited" - Lise de la Salle, piano
(Naïve Classique)

French pianist Lise de la Salle began her piano studies at the age of four, gave her first broadcast over Radio France at eight, and hasn't stopped growing in interesting, self-determined ways ever since. For the booklet cover of her latest album Bach Unlimited, she poses amid a forest of piano frames in the Steinway factory, Hamburg, as if to demonstrate her point that so much of the history and literature of the piano goes back to its basics in J. S. Bach.

The present program certainly bears that out, in music that often harkens back to the direct inspiration of Bach's Italian Concerto in F and the Chaconne in D minor from Violin Partita No. 2. We actually hear the Chaconne in the famous Busoni transcription, which contrasts heightened rhythms and moments of intense excitement with moments of calm and reflection such as that which occurs in conjunction with a heart-stopping key change and a slowing of the previously demonic pace at 7:28, just past the mid-point of the piece. We also get a clear impression of the violin technique of bariolage as transferred agreeably between the pianist's hands, and of special effects such as the imitation posthorn-calls as La Salle builds toward the climax and final fadeout. A thrilling performance.

At the outset of the program we have a lively account of the Italian concerto, the central Andante of which is the immediate inspiration of the dreamlike beauty of *Chant nocturne* by La Salle's exact contemporary Thomas Enhco (b. Paris 1988). The grandson of Jean-Claude Casadesus, he is himself an inspired composer in jazz and classical idioms who has lived and worked in Europe and America and incorporates a rich variety of influences. La Salle and Enhco collaborate in a pop-flavored *Sur la route* (On the Road) for piano, four hands, based on the motto BACH (where the letters are German notation for B-flat, A, C, B-natural). We also hear two other Enhco pieces written expressly for this album, *La question de l'ange* (question of the angel) based on the Chaconne, and *L'aube nous verra* (the dawn finds us), after the theme of the Goldberg Variations.

Lise de la Salle does some of her best work on behalf of Bach-inspired music that was written by famous latter-

greatest works in any genre, Robert Schumann's *Kinderszenen* (Scenes from Childhood) might seem at first blush almost trivial. The problems a pianist faces in this work are not so much matters of technique (although these are *not* trivial) but of interpretation. What is most required here is a nuanced approach to a set of character pieces depicting a day in the life of a young child, listening to tales of foreign lands and people, playing *Hasche-Mann* (Blind Man's Bluff) with his playmates, pleading with his mother (perhaps for a special treat), riding on a stick-horse (*Ritter am Steckenpferd*) and drifting into sleep, sometimes blissful (*Traümerei,* Dreaming) and at other times filled with nightmares (*Fürchtenmachen*, Frightening). All are part of one's early years that a pianist must be able to re-create imaginatively in order to make these Scenes from Childhood as convincing as Weder does here.

day composers but egregiously neglected for all that. We have Albert Roussel's Prelude & Fugue, Op. 46; Francis Poulenc's Valse-Improvisation on the name Bach, and Franz Liszt's Fantasia & Fugue on the theme B-A-C-H. All are terrific works that need the exposure Lise gives them. The Roussel begins with enough demonic fury to tear a cat in, but the chaos is tamed and worked out in the contrapuntal clarity of the fugal portion. The Poulenc gallops maniacally along like a nightmare until the rigor of Bachian logic calls it to an abrupt end at only 1:22.

And the Liszt? At 13:19 it is a major work, based on cyclic procedures, in which some of the recurring motifs seem to be related in interesting ways to incidents in the Bach Chaconne. In its own way, it is as impressive an achievement as Liszt's B minor Sonata, making its neglect all the more puzzling.

Pentatone's Remastered Classics series of hybrid SACD's gives welcome re-exposure to quadrophonic recordings made by Deutsche Grammophon in the early 1970s. The technology was then clearly ahead of its time, as very few listeners had the equipment to hear quad sound in their own homes. In producing the Remastered Classics series, many of the original engineers were retained as consultants. The original analog machines used in the process were connected to state-of-the-art DSD analog to digital converters without the intervention of mixing consoles. The result is claimed to be faithful to the original intention in terms of absolute sonic clarity and presence.

In the following recent releases of Beethoven symphonies under the baton of renowned Czech conductor Rafael Kubelik (1914-1996), the Remastered Classics series reaches a new high standard In terms of vibrant performances captured in a remarkable soundstage perspective. These recordings, made with the preeminent orchestras of two continents, may well serve as a standard for other Beethoven projects to aim at.

Beethoven: Symphonies 1 & 4
Rafael Kubelik conducts London Symphony, Israel Philharmonic Orchestras
(Pentatone SACD)

Sorry to say this, but the account of Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op. 21, recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra at Brent Town Hall, Wembley in June, 1974, starts off in a rather pedestrian manner, even with Rafael Kubelik at the helm. It picks up noticeably in élan and purpose with the stirring Menuetto, which was in fact Beethoven's very first symphonic scherzo in all but

Beethoven: Symphonies 2 & 5
Rafael Kubelik conducts Royal Concertgebouw, Boston Symphony Orchestras
(Pentatone SACD)

Beethoven's well-known propensity for joking was readily apparent to the Viennese audience who heard the 5 April, 1803 premiere of his Symphony No. 2 in D, Op. 36. The side-slapping dance imitated by the oboe and bassoon quartet in the scherzo movement and a motif suggesting hiccoughing in the finale were evidence of that. But it has its serious matter, as well. In its major-

Beethoven: Symphonies 6, 7, 8
Rafael Kubelik conducts Orchestre de Paris, Wiener Philharmoniker, Cleveland Orchestra (Pentatone SACD)

As preposterous as it may sound, I must say that this SACD release of Beethoven's "Pastorale" is the most vibrant recording I've ever heard of one of the world's best-loved symphonies. In this account of Symphony No. 6 in F, Op. 68 (to give its exact pedigree), Kubelik's pacing is always inspiring, and the response by the Orchestre de Paris is immediate and alive. The rhythms

name. This movement may be in the time of a minuet, but with its virulent brio and its marking of *Allegro molto e vivace*, no one in his right mind would consider dancing to it. High spirits prevail all the way to the end of the similarly marked finale, which is preceded by a slow introduction before things really hear up!

Actually, one possible reason for the deliberate pacing chosen here in the first two movements may be that Beethoven was carefully preparing the foundation for his unusual, distinctive style. As Pentatone's booklet notes cogently explain, this was something new in music, a major work built on cyclic principles in which the basic musical forms are first broken down into smaller components, to emerge later in other new and different forms. Even to a naïve listener, it sounds as if the composer is doing something very clever – and he was!

The other thing that really must have grabbed the attention of Beethoven's first audiences was that it started off with a dissonance that was obviously badly in need of a resolution. It begins with a series of accentuated dominant/tonic chord sequences in what many listeners would have perceived as the "wrong" key, and only gradually is the home key of C major revealed.

Symphony in B-flat major, Op. 60 may seem deceptively gentle and sunny, especially by contrast with its predecessor, the "Eroica," but it, too, contains unsuspected depths of feeling such as we find in the open-air mood of the wonderful Adagio. The very outset of this work, in which the thematic material seems to slowly and gradually coalesce from chaos, would have reminded its listeners of nothing less than the opening of Haydn's *Creation*.

Cheerful moods prevail in this symphony, with occasional shadows to give us a respite from such unmitigated happiness. The best example occurs in the afore-mentioned Adagio in which one of Beethoven's most gracious songlike melodies, recalling love and the beauty of a nature scene, floats minor and loud-soft contrasts, it probably made its first audience somewhat uneasy, though their feelings would have been assuaged by the slow movement, a Larghetto that is lyrical and pastoral in its beginning, succeeded surprisingly by dancelike material reminiscent of a slow waltz and then a somewhat brisker promenade.

Kubelik's recording with the Royal Concertgebouw of Amsterdam captures these elements in the Second Symphony brilliantly, as it also does its expanded dimensions and incipient sense of drama. Beethoven's contemporaries may not have fully grasped the significance of these new elements, but that did not keep the Second from becoming Beethoven's most popular symphony in his lifetime.

Where Beethoven's new innovations were leading was made fully evident in Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67. The Fifth may, in fact, hold the distinction of being music's first organically conceived symphony. Though it still adheres at least to the balanced formal structure (opening, slow movement, dance movement, and quick finale) of the classical symphony, the overall impact of the work is clearly greater than the sum of its parts. And, amazingly, the terse four-note motif that we hear so prominently at the very opening (In the Second War, it was popularly understood to scan with **. . . –** or "V" for Victory in Morse code) proves to be a kernel from which other elements arise, right on through to its final resolution in the glorious bustle and clamor of the tumultuous finale. ("It makes one fear that the house might fall down" was Goethe's reaction.)

Kubelik, at the podium of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, scores many impressive points in the long-limbed, deeply melodic second movement, Andante con moto, as Beethoven contrasts two compelling themes by means of a variety of variation and sonata-form elements that include several splendid crescendos. The pacing here is deliberate without losing an iota of the movement's vital tension. At the end of the in the opening movement, subtitled "Awakening of cheerful feelings upon arrival in the countryside," are rhythmically alert with strong underpinning by the lower strings. They even include, unless my ears deceive me, some retrograde motion, as if to capture in music the common optical illusion of wheels spinning backwards in a fast-moving carriage. There are also many rhythmic and thematic elements in this opening Allegro, of which we will hear echoes later on in the course of an organically structured work.

In "Scene by a Brook," after a gentle lift-off in the strings, the stream begins its continuous flowing, with the presence of a human observer as the composer's comment on man's spirit in communion with the invigorating influence of the natural world. This is not "program" music as the Romantic Era understood it, nor is it "absolute" music, but something exalted above both of those limiting concepts. The score involves all the families of the orchestra in the kind of delectable material that must surely make this work a particular favorite among symphonic musicians. In this slow movement there is a hauntingly beautiful melody for the bassoon, plus a glorious coda in which flute, oboe and clarinet, impersonate the calls of a nightingale, quail, and cuckoo, respectively.

Kubelik does some of his best work in the last three movements, "Merry gathering of country folk," "Storm," and "Shepherd's song of grateful thanksgiving after the storm," all of which are to be taken *attacca*, with the greatest possible assurance. The galumphing foot-falls of the dancers are captured in all of Beethoven's earthy humor, and the tympani whacks in the "Storm" are positively sensational (and fear-inspiring). The mood of the final section, where the harmony of man and nature is restored as the major key is affirmed, is beautifully done.

Symphonies Nos. 7 in A major. Op. 92, and 8 in F major, Op. 93, both on CD2, may be taken together as tightly constructed works in which

serenely over a gently rocking accompaniment of dotted rhythms, which only gradually increase in importance and gain the upper hand. A punchy scherzo and an exuberantly rushing finale that is continually interrupted by blows from the orchestra and pauses to begin anew, conclude a highly attractive work in which Beethoven's powers of invention, melodic and otherwise, are much in evidence.

The recording, made with the Israel Philharmonic in the Herkulessalle, of the Residenz, Munich in September, 1975, reveals both conductor and orchestra in fine mettle.

Allegro third movement, a scherzo in all but name, the music falls suddenly quiet and becomes slow and measured, underscored by the beats of the tympani. It proves to be a coda which leads without a break into the stunning finale, a real masterstroke that Kubelik handles with surpassing skill. The finale moves, with the irresistible impetus of a cavalry charge, in several stages all the way to a triumphant C major conclusion. To quote the composer's own words, "Joy follows sorrow, sunshine—rain."

Beethoven experimented with all the fascinating things one could do in the way of rhythm and tempo. Significantly, neither symphony has a slow movement. Kubelik takes the tempo in the solemnly beautiful Allegretto in No. 7 with its distinctive long-short-short rhythm, correctly, rather than as an *ersatz* slow movement. And the Allegretto scherzando movement of No. 8 leaves absolutely no doubt as to the composer's wicked intentions, with the rhythm of the strings set against the "ticking" of the woodwinds as a satirical mismatch.

In both symphonies, particularly in No. 8, the themes in the opening movements seem to spring forth from tightly-wound coils, the very antithesis of the expansive process we witnessed in the "Pastoral" Symphony of five years earlier. The finales of both are breath-taking in their tautness and excitement. No. 7, with Kubelik at the podium of the Vienna Philharmonic, is competitive with the best accounts of this work. And No. 8, with the Cleveland Orchestra, is absolutely the best performance I have heard of a 26-minute symphony that is too-often dismissed as a lap dog. (Actually, as Kubelik shows us, it is a "yap dog," with plenty to bark about!)