



William Steinberg (originally Hans Wilhelm Steinberg) (August 1, 1899 – May 16, 1978) was a German conductor. He was born in Cologne, but left Germany for (what is now) Israel in 1936. He decided to leave Germany because the Nazis had removed him from the Frankfurt Opera in 1933 and had limited him to conducting all-Jewish orchestras. Eventually, together with Bronislaw Huberman he founded and conducted the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. Steinberg left for the United States in 1938. He conducted the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra from 1945 to 1952. From 1958 to 1960 he conducted the London Philharmonic Orchestra. From 1969 to 1972 he conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He was also principal guest conductor of the New York Philharmonic from 1966 to 1968. He is best known for directing the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra from 1952 to 1976. William Steinberg was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. He died in New York City.

BEETHOVEN

SYMPHONY NO. 3 in E FLAT OP. 55

"EROICA"

William Steinberg—The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra



Beethoven completed this work in 1804; it was introduced privately in Vienna, chez Prince Lobkowitz, to whom it is dedicated. Beethoven also conducted the public premiere on April 7, 1805, in the Theater-an-der-Wien. Despite everything written to the contrary, the *Sinfonia eroica* was never a "portrait" of Napoleon Bonaparte, although Beethoven did plan to dedicate it to the charismatic Corsican "First Consul of France." He went into a rage, however, when a pupil, Ferdinand Ries, brought news in May 1804 that Napoleon had crowned himself Emperor. According to Ries, Beethoven shouted that the General was only "an ordinary human being, [and] went to the table, took hold of the title page, tore it in two, and threw it on the floor."

A different story posits that Beethoven erased the Napoleonic dedication from a copy made in August 1804 and entitled *Sinfonia grande*. In fact, *Sinfonia eroica* did not appear as the work's title until publication in 1806.

What Beethoven never told Ries was that Prince Lobkowitz, before May 1804, had proffered a handsome fee in exchange for the dedication, which Napoleon's subsequent arrogance made possible. Or that Beethoven realized the advantage in bringing with him a *Sinfonia Bonaparte* when a Parisian trip was proposed later on (but never materialized). It was conductor Arturo Toscanini who put everything into perspective 50-odd years ago: "Some say Napoleon, some say Hitler, some say Mussolini; for me it is *Allegro con brio*."

The sheer length of the *Eroica's* first movement was revolutionary -- an opening movement of 691 measures, plus an exposition repeat of 151 measures. No less revolutionary was Beethoven's jarring C sharp at the end of a main theme in E flat major -- indeed it is an E flat arpeggio. Not until the recapitulation does that C sharp become D flat enharmonically. It is in

this movement that the long-range harmonic connections explored over the course of the Romantic era have their real start; the movement is heroic mainly in the vastness of its reach.

A "Funeral March" slow movement was hardly revolutionary, but the span of his C minor slow movement, in rondo form, was unprecedented, and so was its range of emotions from outright grief to C major solace. Although "hunt" music in the third-movement Trio may have startled the *Eroica's* first audience after funerary tragedy on an unprecedented scale, hunting music in Beethoven's time was even more modish than funeral marches. However, he used it for more than mere surprise in the midst of an onrushing and sometimes raucous scherzo (thereby banishing minuets and *Ländler*s until the symphonies of Bruckner and Mahler). Psychologically he needed sunshine after so much weighty, solemn music.

He was also setting up a racy finale -- a set of variations including a fugue that detractors ever since have called a falling-off of inspiration. This kind of argument ignores, however, not only what preceded the *Eroica* historically -- Bach's *Goldberg Variations* for example -- but also Beethoven's own ennoblement of the form. He had already used the legato second theme of his *Eroica* finale in *The Creatures of Prometheus* (ballet music of 1800), in an 1802 *Contredanse*, and as the subject of 15 keyboard variations that same year (Op. 35), subtitled *Eroica* once the symphony had been published. A never-ending wonder is the viability of this subject after so much use. Beethoven's range of invention in the symphonic finale of 1804 -- from hymnody to humor, from fugue to dance, culminating in a *Presto coda* -- successfully freed the listener from the gripping, even shocking drama that has stalked his first and second movements.

BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 3 "EROICA"

WILLIAM STEINBERG and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

- 1 Allegro Con Brio 14:31
- 2 Marcia Funebre - Adagio Assai 15:33
- 3 Scherzo - Allegro Vivace 5:56
- 4 Finale - Allegro Molto, Poco Andante, Presto 11:03
- Total Time: 47:03

Recorded by Command Classics 1963 on 35mm film

Engineer Mastering - George Piros Engineer Recording Chief - Robert Fine Producer - Enoch Light



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