honored and celebrated.

Later writers characterized the Seventh Symphony in various ways, but it is striking how many of the descriptions touch on its frenzy, approaching a bacchanal at times, and on its elements of dance. Richard Wagner's poetic account is well known: "All tumult, all yearning and storming of the heart, become here the blissful insolence of joy, which carries us away with bacchanalian power through the roomy space of nature, through all the streams and seas of life, shouting in glad self-consciousness as we sound throughout the universe the daring strains of this human sphere-dance. The Symphony is the Apotheosis of the Dance itself: it is Dance in its highest aspect, the loftiest deed of bodily motion, incorporated into an ideal mold of tone."

As biographer Maynard Solomon has keenly observed, the descriptions of Wagner and others seem to have a common theme: "The apparently diverse free-associational images of these critics—of masses of people, of powerful rhythmic energy discharged in action or in dance, of celebrations, weddings, and revelry—may well be variations on a single image: the carnival or festival, which from time immemorial has temporarily lifted the burden of perpetual subjugation to the prevailing social and natural order by periodically suspending all customary privileges, norms, and imperatives." Wellington's Victory gave a realistic imitation of battle between the English (represented by the song "Rule Britannia") and the French ("Marlborough s'en va-t'en guerre") and ends victoriously with variations on "God Save the King"—it is an effective but hardly subtle work. The Seventh apparently tapped into similar celebratory emotions vivid at the moment, but on a much deeper level that has allowed the Symphony to retain its stature ever since.

Beethoven

Symphony No. 4 & 7

René Leibowitz / The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Robert Schumann described this symphony as "a slender Greek maiden between two Norse giants," and started the long-standing tradition which holds that somehow Beethoven's even-numbered symphonies are less profound than the odd-numbered ones. This may seem true at first glance, but there is much that Schumann's analysis leaves unsaid. While the lambent beauty of the Adagio might suggest the kind of Classicism that the Eroica transcended, one should remember that, in many senses, the Fourth, emerging from an intensely foreboding, and even tragic, introduction, is no less heroic than either the Eroica or the Fifth. Dark-hued and intensely chromatic strivings pull the music from B flat minor toward the unison F which heralds the beginning of the sunny Allegro vivace exposition. While Weber criticized the deliberately sparse-sounding introduction, Tovey sensed its immense stature, writing of the "sky-dome vastness" of its harmonic progression. The Adagio, a sonata structure minus development, begins with an insistent rhythm which recurs several times. At the start, the violins sing out the sublimely reflective principal motif, a tenderly lyrical utterance which stands in direct contrast to the opening figure. These two contrasting elements are always at the hub of the movement, the expressive violin theme later becoming the subject of variations. The reprise of the second group then leads to the highly atmospheric coda. What follows is the Scherzo; a bucolic main theme suggests the rustic folk-dance idioms that Beethoven knew well; nevertheless, the movement surpasses the Eroica's Scherzo in power and dynamism. It should be noted that this is the first of Beethoven's symphonic scherzos to feature a repeat of the trio section, which is significant, given the massive nature of the surrounding material. The scherzo is heard one last time, now abridged, before the shattering final coda with its three-bar horn solo. Expanded scherzos also figure in several of Beethoven's later symphonies (the exception is the Eighth), and sketches suggest the technique was originally envisaged for the Fifth. Opening with a series of mercurial sixteenth note fragments from which the first subject group is derived, the final movement is "perpetuum mobile." As the movement unfolds, the oboe's second theme provides contrast with the initial statement, the relentless development section posing serious technical challenges to the lower instruments: bassoon, cellos, and basses. In the coda, surely one of Beethoven's most humorous inventions, the theme is passed around at half speed after a "false" ending has been reached, and finally brushed aside dramatically as cellos and basses plummet down the scale before the striking final bars for full orchestra.

Beethoven wrote the Seventh Symphony in 1811-12, completing it in April. It was premiered at one of his most successful concerts, given on December 8, 1813, to benefit soldiers wounded in the battle of Hanau a few months earlier. Paired with the Seventh was the first performance of Wellington's Victory, also known as the "Battle Symphony." The enjoyment of the event was hardly surprising given what most members of the Viennese audience had been through during the preceding decade. Napoleon's occupations of Vienna in 1805 and 1809 had proven traumatic, but the tide had turned with the Battle of Leipzig in 1813. In June, the Duke of Wellington was triumphant against Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon's younger brother, in the northern Spanish town of Vittoria, and within the year the Congress of Vienna was convened to reapportion Europe in the aftermath of France's defeat. After so much conflict and misery, impending victory could be

Beethoven

Symphony No. 4 & 7

René Leibowitz / The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Symphony No. 4 In B-Flat Major, Op. 60
1 Adagio; Allegro Vivace 8:39
2 Adagio 9:12
3 Presto; Assai Meno Presto 5:06
4 Allegro Ma Non Troppo 6:31

Symphony No. 7 In A Major, Op. 92
5 Poco Sostenuto 10:43
6 Allegretto 9:17
7 Vivace; Un Poco Meno Allegro 7:46
8 Allegro Con Brio 7:17

Recorded by RCA for Readers Digest 1961
Producer - Charles Gerhardt   Engineer - K.E. Wilkinson

For more info e-mail us:
admin@highdeftapetransfers.com
or visit our website:
www.highdeftapetransfers.com

Beethoven Symphony No. 4 & 7 - René Leibowitz - The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Beethoven Symphony No. 4 & 7 - René Leibowitz - The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra