

Together with his younger colleague Malcolm Sargent, Beecham founded the London Philharmonic, and he conducted its first performance at the Queen's Hall in 1932. In the 1940s he worked for three years in the United States where he was music director of the Seattle Symphony and conducted at the Metropolitan Opera. After his return to Britain, he founded the Royal Philharmonic in 1946 and conducted it until his death in 1961.

Beecham's repertoire was eclectic, sometimes favouring lesser-known composers over famous ones. His specialities included composers whose works were neglected in Britain before he became their advocate, such as Delius and Berlioz. Other composers with whose music he was frequently associated were Haydn, Schubert, Sibelius and the composer he revered above all others, Mozart.



BERLIOZ

Symphonie Fantastique

Music Institute of the University of the Pacific and Pacific Music Society of the University of the Pacific

Sir Thomas Beecham

Bart., C.H.

**ORCHESTRE NATIONAL
DE LA RADIODIFFUSION
FRANÇAISE**



Long admired as one of the most compelling recordings ever made of Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, Thomas Beecham's performance with the *Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française* is still a strong contender, even in the age of all-digital sound and super-audio technology. First, Beecham's interpretation is highly dramatic, exciting, and suspenseful, and Berlioz's Romantic scene painting and hallucinatory imagery are vividly rendered. Second, the sound is striking for its realistic qualities and positively stunning for a recording made in 1959, at the dawn of stereo reproduction. Despite some incidental background noises that can be overlooked, the instruments were recorded with such care and fidelity that they have natural resonance and true, vibrant timbres that can only be heard within the orchestra.

Sir Thomas Beecham, 2nd Baronet, CH (29 April 1879 – 8 March 1961) was an English conductor and impres-

sario best known for his association with the London Philharmonic and the Royal Philharmonic orchestras. He was also closely associated with the Liverpool Philharmonic and Hallé orchestras. From the early 20th century until his death, Beecham was a major influence on the musical life of Britain and, according to the BBC, was Britain's first international conductor.

Born to a rich industrial family, Beecham began his career as a conductor in 1899. He used his access to the family fortune to finance opera from the 1910s until the start of the Second World War, staging seasons at Covent Garden, Drury Lane and His Majesty's Theatre with international stars, his own orchestra and a wide repertoire. Among the works he introduced to England were Richard Strauss's *Elektra*, *Salome* and *Der Rosenkavalier* and three operas by Frederick Delius.

Berlioz Symphonie Fantastique

Sir Thomas Beecham

Orchestre National De La Radiodiffusion Française

- 1 Rêveries - Passions 12:37
- 2 Un Bal 6:47
- 3 Scène Aux Champs (Part 1) 5:59
- 4 Scène Aux Champs (Conclusion) 11:04
- 5 Marche Au Supplice 5:22
- 6 Songe D'Une Nuit Du Sabbat 10:44

Released by EMI 1958

Recording Engineer - Paul Vavasseur Producer – Victor Olof



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