

BEETHOVEN

Symphonies Nos. 5 and 6 “Pastoral”

Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia
Béla Drahos



Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)

Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67

Symphony No. 6 in F Major "Pastoral", Op. 68

Beethoven wrote nine symphonies, the first heralding the new century, in 1800, and the last completed in 1824. Although he made few changes to the composition of the orchestra itself, adding, when occasion demanded, one or two instruments more normally found in the opera-house, he expanded vastly the traditional form, developed in the time of Haydn and Mozart, reflecting the personal and political struggles of a period of immense change and turbulence. To his contemporaries he seemed an inimitable original, but to a number of his successors he seemed to have expanded the symphony to an intimidating extent.

Beethoven's *Symphony in C minor, Opus 67*, is a work that has enjoyed enormous popularity, not least for its patriotic associations that accord well with the period of its composition and have proved to suit the sensibilities of later generations. For some the work has become known as *Fate*, as the result of an alleged remark of the composer, reported by the unreliable Schindler, on the opening of the first movement - Thus *Fate* knocks at the door. It has been left for others to point out that there is plenty of evidence for similar knocking at doors in other compositions by Beethoven, the initial rhythmic figure being one that he found to his purpose on other occasions.

Beethoven composed music relatively slowly and carefully, and the early sketches for the *C minor Symphony* are found in notebooks of 1804, the period of the *Eroica Symphony*. The work was completed in 1808 and dedicated to Count Razumovsky, Prince Lichnowsky's brother-in-law, the Tsar's representative in Vienna and a patron of great munificence, while his money lasted, and to Prince Lobkowitz. It received its first performance at a concert on 22nd December, 1808. The taxing programme, that resulted in near disaster in the final *Choral Fantasia*, included the *Pastoral Symphony* and the *Fourth Piano Concerto*, as well as a number of items for soloists and chorus. It seems that the *Fifth Symphony* was at first intended, like the *Fourth*, for Count Franz von Oppersdorff, from whom the

composer certainly received some payment. By September of the year of its completion, however, Beethoven had sold it to the publishers Breitkopf and Härtel. In orchestration the *Fifth Symphony* shows innovations in its inclusion of the piccolo, the double bassoon and three trombones in the final movement.

The sixth of Beethoven's nine symphonies, the *Pastoral*, was first performed at a concert in Vienna in December 1808. The occasion was an important one for the composer, since it was likely to prove the only significant source of income for him that year. In preparation for the event he had put aside work on his projected opera *Macbeth* and on the alternative text of *Bradamante*, both supplied by Heinrich von Collin, and assembled a programme of phenomenal length. The works played included the *Fifth Symphony*, the *Fourth Piano Concerto*, a piano fantasia, items for soloists and chorus and, in conclusion, a *Fantasia* for the Pianoforte which ends with the gradual entrance of the entire orchestra and the introduction of the choruses as a finale, the *Choral Fantasia*.

Predictably the concert was an embarrassment to Beethoven's friends, compelled to sit for four hours in the bitterly cold Theater-an-der-Wien. As one otherwise sympathetic observer reported, it proved possible to have too much of a good thing, and still more of a loud. The concert was under-rehearsed, and Beethoven had met considerable opposition from members of the orchestra. In the *Choral Fantasia* instructions about repeats had been misunderstood, so that the work had to be started again, and Beethoven intervened with audible comments on mistakes. Nevertheless the *Sixth Symphony*, which happily opened the concert, was well enough received, in spite of its unusual length.

The advertisement for Beethoven's December concert billed the *Pastoral Symphony* as *A Recollection of Country Life*, to be described by the composer, in a careful attempt to dispel any suspicion that he had written a crude imitation of nature, as more an expression of feeling than tone-painting. In some ways the work may be seen as a conclusion and summary of a tradition of music inspired by the country, although the Wordsworthian suggestion of emotion recollected in tranquillity is very much of its period.

Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia

The Hungarian Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia was formed in 1992 from members of the Hungarian Symphony Orchestra by Ibolya Tóth, of the Hungarian Phoenix Studio, initially as a recording orchestra for Naxos, but under its permanent conductor, the flautist Béla Drahos, resident conductor of the Hungarian Symphony Orchestra (Hungarian Radio Symphony Orchestra), the Sinfonia also undertakes public concerts. The orchestra has among its musicians the principal wind-players of major Hungarian orchestras, many of whom have already recorded concertos for Naxos and draws on the leading players in Budapest. The Sinfonia ranges in size from a Baroque string orchestra to an ensemble suitable for Haydn or Mozart, or, augmented, for performance of Beethoven. The recordings by the orchestra of Haydn symphonies have met with particularly warm critical acclaim.

Béla Drahos

Béla Drahos was born in Kaposvár in South-West Hungary in 1955 and entered the Győr Conservatory in 1969, winning first prize in the Concertino Prague '71 International Flute Competition and a year later in the flute competition staged by Hungarian Television. Study at the Liszt Academy in Budapest led to graduation with distinction in 1978, after a further award in Prague and in 1979 at the Bratislava Interpodium, and further distinction, including the Hungarian Liszt Prize in 1985, selection as Artist of the Year in Hungary in 1986 and the Bartók-Pásztory Prize in 1988. Béla Drahos is the leader and founding member of the Hungarian Radio Wind Quintet and since 1976 has served as Principal Flautist of the Budapest Symphony Orchestra. His concert career has included performances throughout Europe and as far afield as New Zealand. He has more recently embarked on a parallel career as a conductor, and in the summer of 1993 was appointed conductor of the Hungarian State Symphony Orchestra.

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Playing
Time:
77'49"Ludwig van
BEETHOVEN

(1770 - 1827)

Symphonies Nos. 5 and 6 "Pastoral"Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia
Béla Drahos**Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67**

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|---|------------------|---------|
| 1 | Allegro con brio | (7:18) |
| 2 | Andante con moto | (9:21) |
| 3 | Allegro | (8:33) |
| 4 | Allegro | (10:36) |

Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Op. 68 "Pastoral"

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| 5 | Erwachen heiterer Empfindungen bei der Ankunft auf dem Lande
(Awakening of Cheerful Feelings upon Arrival in the Country):
Allegro ma non troppo | (11:10) |
| 6 | Szene am Bach (Scene by the Brook): Andante molto mosso | (12:04) |
| 7 | Lustiges Zusammensein der Landleute (Merry Gathering of Country Folk):
Allegro | (4:59) |
| 8 | Gewitter, Sturm (Thunderstorm): Allegro | (3:54) |
| 9 | Hirtengesang: Frohe und dankbare Gefühle nach dem Sturm
(Shepherd's Song: Happy and Thankful Feelings after the Storm): Allegretto | (9:53) |

Recorded by Phoenix Studio at the Italian Institute, Budapest,
in June, 1995.

Producer: Ibolya Tóth

Engineer: János Bohus

Music Notes: Keith Anderson

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