

BEETHOVEN Fidelio (Highlights)

Nielsen • Winbergh • Moll • Titus • Lienbacher • Pecoraro Hungarian Radio Chorus • Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia Michael Halász



Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827) Fidelio (Highlights) Opera in Two Acts

Don Fernando, the King's Minister	Wolfgang Glashof, Bass
Don Pizarro, Governor of the Prison	Alan Titus, Baritone
Florestan, a prisoner	Gösta Winbergh, Tenor
Leonore, his wife, in male attire as Fidelio	Inga Nielsen, Soprano
Rocco, Chief Jailer	Kurt Moll, Bass
Marzelline, his daughter	Edith Lienbacher, Soprano
Jaquino, assistant to Rocco	Herwig Pecoraro, Tenor
First Prisoner	Péter Pálinkás, Tenor
Second Prisoner	József Moldvay, Bass

Hungarian Radio Chorus (Chorus Master: Kálmán Strausz) Nicholaus Esterházy Sinfonia Michael Halász

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) Fidelio (Highlights)

Overture	6:25
Act I Aria: O wär' ich schon mit dir vereint (Marzelline) Quartet: Mir ist so wunderbar (Marzelline, Leonore, Rocco, Jaquino) Aria: Hat man nicht auch Gold beineben (Rocco) March Aria and Chorus: Ha! Welch ein Augenblick! (Pizarro, the Watch)	3:55 4:49 2:55 2:22 3:15
Recitative and Aria: <i>Abscheulicher! Wo eilst du hin?</i> (Leonore) Finale: <i>O welche Lust</i> (Chorus of Prisoners)	7:29 7:04
	Act I Aria: O wär' ich schon mit dir vereint (Marzelline) Quartet: Mir ist so wunderbar (Marzelline, Leonore, Rocco, Jaquino) Aria: Hat man nicht auch Gold beineben (Rocco) March Aria and Chorus: Ha! Welch ein Augenblick! (Pizarro, the Watch) Recitative and Aria: Abscheulicher! Wo eilst du hin? (Leonore)

Act II

9	Introduction and Aria: Gott! Welch' Dunkel hier! (Florestan)	10:50
10	Quartet: Er sterbe! (Pizarro, Florestan, Leonore, Rocco)	5:12
11	Duet: O namenlose Freude! (Leonore, Florestan)	2:45
12	Finale: Heil! Heil sei dem Tag! (People and Prisoners)	2:07
13	Des besten Königs Wink und Wille	7:54
	(Don Fernando, People and Prisoners, Rocco, Pizarro, Leonore, Marzelline, Flo	orestan)
14	Wer ein holdes Weib errungen	4:03
	(People and Prisoners, Florestan, Leonore, Marzelline, Jaquino, Rocco, Don Fe	rnando)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) Fidelio (Highlights)

The son of a singer and grandson of a former Kapellmeister in the service of the Archbishop-Elector of Cologne at his court in Bonn, Beethoven became familiar, even as a boy, with theatrical repertoire. In 1782 his teacher Neefe used him as his deputy, employed in rehearsals of theatre music. In subsequent years in Bonn he became familiar with a wide operatic repertoire, further extended by the variety of works that he heard in Vienna, after he had settled there in 1792.

In Bonn Beethoven had contributed music for Count Waldstein's Ritterballett of 1791. Ten vears later he provided a score in Vienna for the ballet Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus (The Creatures of Prometheus) by Salvatore Viganò. Although he wrote arias for use in operas by other composers, it was not until 1804 that he started work on what was to be his only opera, Fidelio, In 1798 the French writer Jean-Nicolas Bouilly's Léonore, ou L'amour conjugale (Leonora, or Conjugal Love) had been staged with music by the singer and composer Pierre Gaveaux. The plot was topical, dealing as it did, with unjust imprisonment and the rescue of a prisoner through the bravery of his loyal wife. The opera enjoyed success in Paris, and a similar reception was accorded Ferdinando Paër's Italian version staged in Dresden in 1804. Bouilly's libretto was translated into German by Joseph von Sonnleithner, who was appointed Secretary to the Court Theatre in February 1804 and had been given the temporary position of director of the Theateran-der-Wien, replacing the actor-manager Emanuel Schikaneder, author of the libretto of Mozart's Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute). In accordance with terms agreed with Schikaneder. Beethoven had occupied rooms at the theatre and this arrangement was renewed with Baron von Braun, the new lessee. The

choice of libretto was undoubtedly influenced by the success in Vienna of Cherubini's opera *Les deux journées* (The Two Days), known in English as *The Water Carrier*, again based on a libretto by Bouilly, a 'rescue' opera suggested by an incident in the French revolutionary Reign of Terror.

Beethoven's opera, under the title Fidelio, insisted on by the theatre to avoid confusion with the Léonore of Gaveaux or the Leonora of Paër, was staged with limited success in Vienna in November 1805. introduced by the second of the four different overtures eventually written for the work. There were only three performances of this first version, mounted at a time when Vienna was occupied by the French and many of the composer's supporters had taken refuge elsewhere. Beethoven was induced to shorten the opera, with a libretto now revised by Stephan von Breuning. This version was staged the following year on 29th March and 10th April, this time with the third of the Leonore overtures, the best known in concert performance. It was then withdrawn, apparently through Beethoven's dissatisfaction either with the performance or the financial results. It was not until 1814 after further revision and changes in the libretto by Georg Friedrich Treitschke, an actor who had quickly risen in 1802 to the position of poet and stage-manager of the German Court Theatre, that Fidelio was again staged in Vienna. The Fidelio overture was not ready for the first performance on 23rd May but was available for the second performance, three days later. It is in this final revision, with the new overture, that the opera Fidelio is now generally known.

In the opera the name Fidelio is assumed by the heroine, Leonore, who disguises herself as a boy and takes employment under the gaoler Rocco in the prison where her husband Florestan is kept by his enemy, the prison governor Don Pizarro. She is able to rescue her husband from imminent death, as trumpets announce

Synopsis

 \square The overture *Fidelio*, suggesting a new tonal scheme for the revised opera, provides a more satisfactory introduction to the relatively light-hearted opening scene.

Act I

The scene is the courtyard of a prison. In the background are the main door and a high wall, above which tree-tops can be seen. In the main door there is a smaller entrance that can be opened for those coming on foot and to one side is the porter's lodge. To the left the barred windows of the prison cells can be seen and the door of the gaoler's house, while to the right are trees set in iron railings and the gate to the castle garden. Marzelline, daughter of the gaoler Rocco, is ironing outside the door and the porter Jaquino is standing by his lodge, opening the prison-door from time to time to take packages from people outside. Jaquino takes the opportunity to broach again the question of marriage. Marzelline, however, will have none of him. He pleads to be heard, but as he goes to answer the door she reveals her love rather for Fidelio. although she is sorry for Jaquino. He returns to urge her further, but in vain, as he is called again to the door.

Marzelline remarks that she was happy with Jaquino until Fidelio arrived, but then all was changed. $\boxed{2}$ In an aria [O wär' ich schon mit dir vereint/If only I were married to you] Marzelline sings of her love for Fidelio and how happy she would be in the future she imagines. Rocco greets his daughter and asks whether Fidelio is back yet. At this moment Leonore returns. the arrival of higher authority, to give Don Pizarro his due and allow Leonore and her husband their freedom together.

She is dressed as a boy, wearing a dark-coloured jacket and red waistcoat, dark-coloured breeches, short boots, a black leather belt with a copper buckle, with her hair tied back. She carries on her back a package of food and in her arms chains, which she leaves by the lodge. She shows Rocco the bill for what has been bought, to his satisfaction. He hints that he can see what she has in her heart. 3 In a quartet [Mir ist so wunderbar/It is so wonderful for me] Marzelline believes that she has Fidelio's love. Leonore sings of the danger she is in and the faintness of her hope and her awareness of Marzelline's feelings. Rocco joins the quartet with his understanding that the two are in love. Jaquino, drawing near, is alarmed at what he sees happening. Rocco promises that he will make Fidelio his son-inlaw, once the Governor has left for Seville, but love is not all: money is important. 4 In an aria [Hat man nicht auch Gold beineben/If you have no money] he goes on to point out the importance of money: nothing joined to nothing makes a paltry sum and one who has only love on the table goes away hungry. Leonore agrees and now seeks to accompany him, when he goes into the dungeons, to help him in his work. He tells her that no-one is allowed to go there, but then adds that soon this work will be too much for him and the Governor must allow him to take help with him. She now questions Rocco about the prisoner confined in the deepest dungeon. The man, she is told, has been there two years and must have great enemies if not great crimes to answer: for two months he has been ordered to reduce the prisoner's food, with only two ounces of

black bread a day, no light, no straw, nothing more. Leonore declares she has the strength to see the prisoner. Rocco approves of Fidelio's resolution. Leonore has the strength to bear much for love. Marzelline admires Fidelio's kindness and urges her father to allow Fidelio to accompany him, while the latter seeks to go with Rocco immediately, believing the prisoner to be her husband. She pretends love for Marzelline to gain her purpose.

5 A march is heard, as the main door of the prison is opened and officers and soldiers enter, followed by the prison-governor Pizarro. He posts sentries on the wall and men on the tower and asks Rocco if he has anything to report. Rocco hands him a letter that warns him of the impending surprise visit of the Minister. who has heard rumours of arbitrary imprisonment. Pizarro thinks at once of Florestan Leonore's husband: the Minister believes him dead but if he finds him in the prison, there will be trouble: now there is one way out. 6 In an agitated aria [Ha! Welch ein Augenblick!/Ha! What a moment!) Pizarro sings of the revenge he will now take so that final triumph may be his. The soldiers, seeing him, comment on the obvious importance of the news Pizarro has received, as he talks of death. He calls the captain to him and tells him to post a trumpeter on the tower to observe the road from Seville: as soon as they see a coach approaching, with an escort, they must give a signal. Turning to Rocco, he tells him to hurry and promises him money if he helps him: it is a matter of murder. Rocco is shocked and refuses to kill, as that is not his duty. Pizarro tells him that he will see to the matter but Rocco must hurry to the dungeon where the prisoner he knows of lies and dig a grave there: he himself will use a dagger to do the deed. Rocco adds that death will be a release, the dagger will set the man free, while Pizarro continues to thirst for final revenge on his enemy. He goes into the garden, followed by Rocco.

7 Leonore sees them go. In a recitative [Abscheulicher] Wo eilst du hin?/Abominable! Where are you hurrying?] she summons up her courage. continuing with an aria in which she calls on hope to help her in her duty as a loval wife. As she goes after them into the garden. Marzelline comes out of the house, followed by Jaquino. They are soon joined by Rocco and Leonore. Marzelline is rejecting Jaquino's proposals of marriage and Rocco tells him that he has other better plans. Leonore then suggests to Rocco that he allow the prisoners from the upper cells out into the garden, since the weather is so fine. He is unwilling to act without the Governor's permission, but Marzelline has seen them talking so long that she thinks Rocco may have done him a favour and he will not mind. Rocco tells Fidelio and Jaquino to let the prisoners out and he leaves, to find Pizarro, 8 In the finale of the first act the prisoners slowly emerge, singing of their joy at being again in the open air, [O welche Lust, in freier Luft/O what pleasure, in the open air]. An officer on the wall sees them and goes away again to report the matter, while the prisoners realise they are being observed, now talking softly among themselves. Rocco comes forward, with Leonore, and he tells her that the Governor has given leave for Marzelline's marriage and for Fidelio to accompany him to the dungeon. He tells her what has been planned: the man in the dungeon is to be buried there: Rocco will not murder him, but the Governor will do that himself: they must only dig the grave. He seems to understand Leonore's misgivings, which she explains as not being used to such work. Seeing her tears. Rocco tells her that he will go alone, but Leonore declares that she must see the man. Marzelline and Jaquino hurry in, warning Rocco that Pizarro is approaching, angry that the prisoners have been allowed out. His rage, however, is dissipated when Rocco suggests that they are celebrating the King's name-day, and, as he adds secretly, why not let the prisoners have some freedom, since the other one will die. Mollified, Pizarro warns Rocco not to do such a thing again and orders the prisoners to be returned to their cells. The prisoners now return, bidding farewell to the sunlight. Marzelline comments on the sadness of the prisoners, while Leonore and Jaquino lead them back to their cells and Pizarro bids Rocco be about his business, much as the latter shudders at the task before him.

Act II

9 The second act opens in a dark dungeon, set deep in the prison. To the left is a disused cistern, covered with stones and rubble. In the background can be seen various barred openings in the walls, through which stairs are visible, leading down from above and ending to the right, by the door to the cell. There is a lamp burning. Florestan, shackled by chains to the wall, is sitting on a stone. In a recitative he laments his fate [Gott! Welch Dunkel hier!/God, what darkness is here!), resigned to suffering. In the following aria he recalls earlier happiness, seeming to see an angel, his wife Leonore, leading him to freedom in Heaven. He sinks down, his face buried in his hands. By the light of a lantern Rocco and Leonore are seen descending the steps, bringing with them a jug and the tools they need. Leonore shudders at the cold. They see Florestan not moving, perhaps dead, but then he moves, to the relief of Leonore, who joins Rocco in the work of uncovering the disused cistern. In an aside she declares her intention of rescuing the prisoner, but then must join Rocco in his task. Rocco pauses, to drink from the jug, and Florestan stirs, as Leonore sees. Now he speaks and Leonore sees his face. He seeks to know the identity of the prison governor, revealed to him by Rocco as Pizarro, and urges the gaoler to send a message to his wife Leonore in Seville. Rocco tells him that this is impossible but when he asks for water, Leonore is able to give him wine to drink. Florestan thanks her for the kindness she has shown and she offers him a piece of bread that she has with her, in spite of Rocco's initial reservations.

All is ready, and Rocco gives the agreed signal, which Florestan realises is the presage of his own death. Leonore tries to reassure him. Pizarro appears. cloaked, telling Rocco not to free Florestan from his chains, as time presses. 10 Pizarro draws his dagger and casts aside his cloak, revealing his identity as Pizarro, the man Florestan had sought to overthrow [Er sterhe! Doch er soll erst wissen/He dies! Yet first he must knowl. He makes to stab Florestan but Leonore intervenes, telling him he must first kill her. Florestan's wife. The revelation amazes all three who hear it, but Pizarro then resolves to kill both of them. Leonore draws a small pistol, threatening him, and at this moment the trumpet signal is heard, announcing the approach of the Minister. Florestan is saved, and Pizarro's schemes confounded, Jaquino appears, with officers and soldiers on the steps, announcing the Minister's arrival. Rocco calls back to him, telling the men to bring torches down and escort the Governor away. Leonore and Florestan express their joy, Pizarro his dismay and Rocco his astonishment. As Pizarro makes to rush away, Rocco signals for him to be followed, joins the hands of the couple and hurries after him. [1] Florestan and Leonore sing of their joy [O namenlose Freude!/O indescribable joy!].

12 The scene changes to the parade-ground of the castle, with the statue of the King. Soldiers march in and form an open square. Then the Minister Don Fernando appears from one side, accompanied by Pizarro and officers. People gather, while from the other side Jaquino and Marzelline lead in the prisoners, who kneel before the Minister, whom they welcome [*Heil! Heil sei dem Tag!*/Hai!! Hail to the day!]. [1] Don's Fernando announces that he has come at the King's

behest to put matters to rights [*Des besten Königs Wink* und Wille/The good King's behest brings me to you]. He tells the prisoners to stand up, abjuring tyranny and proclaiming the brotherhood of man. Rocco pushes through the crowd, followed by Leonore and Florestan, ignoring Pizarro's protests. Don Fernando is astonished to see Florestan, whom he thought dead and still more amazed to see Leonore, dressed as a boy. Rocco explains what has happened, how Pizarro planned to murder Florestan and how Leonore had disguised herself and intervened. To popular approval Pizarro is taken away and Leonore, at Don Fernando's command, frees her husband from his fetters. [4] Finally the prisoners and people sing praise of the woman who has rescued her husband [*Wer ein holdes Weib errungen*/He who has won a beloved wife], joined by all in general rejoicing.

Keith Anderson

A libretto for the complete opera is available as PDF files online at www.naxos.com/libretti/fidelio.htm This measure is designed to help keep our releases at an affordable price and maintain Naxos' position as leader in the budget-priced market.

The recording of the complete opera with these artists is available on Naxos 8.660070-71

Inga Nielsen

Born in Denmark, Inga Nielsen studied in Vienna, Stuttgart and Budapest. She began her career at opera houses in Germany and Switzerland and was later engaged by the Opera in Frankfurt. She now appears at leading opera houses throughout the world, including the Vienna State Opera, La Scala, Milan and Covent Garden, and has sung at the festivals in Bayreuth, Salzburg, Vienna, Munich, Aix-en-Provence and Edinburgh. Inga Nielsen often appears as a concert soloist and on radio and television and has made numerous recordings. In 1994 she enjoyed formidable success as Salome in Leipzig, and as the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen. Recent notable successes have included the rôle of the Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at La Scala, Milan, with Sinopoli and a number of Wagnerian rôles. In 1992 Inga Nielsen was honoured by Queen Margarethe of Denmark with the Order of the Dannebrog.

Gösta Winbergh

Gösta Winbergh studied at the Opera Conservatory in Stockholm and made his début in 1973 in Gothenburg, after which he became a member of the Royal Opera in Stockholm, where his rôles included Don Ottavio, Count Almaviva, Tamino, Nemorino and Rodolfo. Since 1981, he has been a member of the Zurich Opera, singing many of the major Mozart rôles, often in productions staged by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle and conducted by Nikolaus Harnoncourt. Winbergh now appears at the major opera houses and festivals throughout the world. In recent seasons he has been appearing with great success in Wagnerian tenor rôles, including Walther in *Die Meistersinger* in Berlin and at Covent Garden and Erik in *Der fliegende Holländer* in Venice. An artist with numerous recordings to his credit, Winbergh is also a highly regarded concert soloist and recitalist.

Kurt Moll

Kurt Moll studied at the Cologne Musikhochschule. He gained his first professional experience at provincial opera houses in Aachen, Mainz and Wuppertal before being engaged by the Staatsoper in Hamburg in 1970. In the same year he made his début at the Salzburg Festival as Sarastro. He now appears at all the leading opera houses, including La Scala, Milan, Covent Garden, and the Metropolitan Opera, New York. He is a frequent visitor to the Bayreuth and Salzburg festivals and is in much demand as a recitalist and concert singer. He has made over 100 recordings and won numerous prizes, including the prestigious title of Kammersänger from no less than three opera houses. In 1992 he was appointed professor at the Cologne Musikhochschule.

Edith Lienbacher

Edith Lienbacher was born in Kärnten and studied at the Conservatory in Klagenfurt before continuing her studies with Hilde Rössl-Majdan at the Vienna Musikhochschule. In 1984 she won the Richard Tauber Competition in London and the following year was engaged at the Vienna Volksoper. Since 1989 she has been a member of the Vienna Staatsoper in repertoire that includes Mozart and many of the great operetta rôles. She has won critical acclaim for her appearances at major international festivals and in the great opera houses of the world. She is equally at home as a Lieder and concert singer. In 1999 she was honoured with the title Kammersängerin.

Alan Titus

Alan Titus was born in New York and studied at the Juilliard School. He made his début at the Washington Opera and has appeared at all the leading houses in the United States and Europe. He is a regular guest at the Munich State Opera, winning acclaim for performances as Olivier in *Capriccio*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* and in the title-rôles in *Le nozze di Figaro* and Hindemith's *Cardillac*. He subsequently made his La Scala début as Mandryka in a new production of *Arabella*. Awards include Singer of the Year from the magazine *Opernwelt* and the title of Kammersänger from the Munich State Opera. Alan Titus is a frequent recitalist and concert singer and his recordings include *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Falstaff* with Sir Colin Davis and *Don Giovanni* with Rafael Kubelík.

Wolfgang Glashof

Wolfgang Glashof was born in 1957. He studied medicine before studying singing at the Conservatory in Nuremburg. He began his professional career at the National Theatre in Mannheim and enjoyed a number of engagements at opera houses in Düsseldorf, Berlin and Vienna in rôles such as Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Danilo in *Die lustige Witwe*. Wolfgang Glashof has appeared as a concert soloist and recitalist throughout Europe.

Herwig Pecoraro

Born in 1957, Herwig Pecoraro studied at the Conservatory in Vorarlberg and in Modena, during which time he took part in master-classes with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. He has appeared at major opera houses throughout the world, including those in Milan, Paris, Vienna and Los Angeles and has taken part in the Salzburg and Bregenz festivals in addition to radio and television appearances. Since 1991 Herwig Pecoraro has been a member of the Vienna Statsoper.

Hungarian Radio Chorus

The Hungarian Radio Chorus was established in 1950 to perform both unaccompanied and orchestral choral works. Since its foundation the chorus has given first performances of a number of specially written works and has made guest appearances at the Festivals in Bayreuth, Edinburgh and Salzburg. The chorus has worked with renowned conductors, such as Doráti, Masur, Sacher and Menuhin, and with Solti, who conducted the chorus in a number of highly successful concerts with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. The chorus has made over eighty recordings, including the acclaimed Naxos recording of *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (8.660027-29).

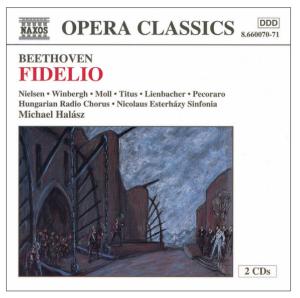
Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia

The Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia was formed in 1992 from members of the Hungarian State Symphony Orchestra by Ibolya Tóth, of the Hungarian Phoenix Studio. The Sinfonia has among its musicians the principal wind-players of the Symphony Orchestra, many of whom have already recorded concertos for Naxos. The conductor of the Sinfonia is the flautist Béla Drahos.

Michael Halász

Michael Halász began his career as a conductor at the Munich Gärtnerplatz Theater, where he directed all operetta productions between 1972 and 1975. In 1975 he moved to Frankfurt as Principal Conductor under Christoph von Dohnányi, working with the most distinguished singers and conducting all the important works of operatic repertoire. Engagements as a guest-conductor followed at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, State Opera Hamburg and in Turin, and in 1977 Dohnányi brought him to the Hamburg State Opera as Principal Conductor. From 1978 to 1991 he was General Music Director of the Hagen Opera House. During this time he made guest appearances in the major opera houses of Germany, including Hamburg, Berlin, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, Stuttgart and Munich. In 1991 he took up the post of Resident Conductor of the Vienna State Opera. In the past fifteen years he has conducted concerts all over the world and made over thirty recordings. Since 1995 he has made several guest appearances with the ABC orchestras in Australia.

Also available is the complete opera recording:



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Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Fidelio, Op. 72 (Highlights)

1 Overture	6:25	8 Prisoner's Chorus:	7:04		
2 O, wär' ich schon	3:55	O welche Lust			
mit dir vereint		9 Gott! Welch' Dunkel hier!	10:50		
3 Mir ist so wunderbar	4:49	10 Er sterbe!	5:12		
4 Hat man nicht auch	2:55	1 O, namenlose Freude!	2:45		
Gold beineben		12 Heil! Heil sei dem Tag	2:07		
5 March	2:22	13 Des besten Königs	7:54		
6 Ha! Welch ein Augenblick	3:15	Wink und Wille			
Abscheulicher!	7:29	14 Wer ein holdes Weib	4:03		
Wo eilst du hin?		errungen			
Nielsen • Winbergh • Moll • Titus • Lienbacher • Pecoraro					

Hungarian Radio Chorus • Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia Michael Halász

Recorded at Phoenix Studios, Budapest, Hungary, from 7th to 10th and 14th to 18th November, 1998 Producer: Ibolya Tóth • Engineer: János Bohus • Editors: Mária Falvay and Veronika Vincze Technical Consultant: Eleanor Thomason (K&A Productions Ltd.) • Booklet Notes: Keith Anderson Please see the the booklet for a detailed artist and track list **The recording of the complete opera with these artists is available on Naxos 8.660070-71** Cover Picture: *Outside the Fort - Set design for Beethoven's Fidelio, Berlin State Opera, 1935* by Ludwig Sievert (1887-1966) (AKG Images)



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