BIS

# Beethoven
# Symphony No. 9

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf
Elisabeth Höngen
Hans Hopf
Otto Edelmann

Choir and Orchestra of the
Bayreuth Festival

## Wilhelm Furtwängler

Broadcast from the Bayreuth Festival,
29th July 1951

This is an unabridged concert performance, the opening of the Bayreuth Festival, as broadcast by Bavarian Radio in 1951 and transmitted internationally, including by Swedish Radio. We have chosen to not change anything, not to 'brush up' the sound, not to clean and shorten the pauses or omit audience noises within the music, but to keep the original as it was. In this way we recreate the feeling of actually sitting in front of an old radio in 1951, listening to this important concert, thus creating a true historical document.

1 Welcoming announcements (German, French, English, Swedish) 1'57

2 Programme announcement / applause for the arrival of Furtwängler 2'19

## van BEETHOVEN, Ludwig (1770–1827)

## Symphony No. 9 in D minor, 'Choral', Op. 125 75'36

3 I. *Allegro ma non troppo e un poco maestoso* 18'01

4 II. *Molto vivace – Presto* 11'46

5 III. *Adagio molto e cantabile – Andante cantabile* 19'13

6 IV. *Presto – Allegro assai – Presto* (recitativo: 'O Freunde, nicht diese Töne!') – *Allegro assai – Allegro assai vivace (alla Marcia) – Andante maestoso – Adagio ma non troppo ma divoto – Allegro energico e sempre ben marcato – Allegro ma non tanto – Presto – Maestoso – Prestissimo* 24'56

7 Applause / closing remarks (Swedish, German) 2'44

TT: 82'45

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf *soprano* · Elisabeth Höngen *alto*
Hans Hopf *tenor* · Otto Edelmann *bass*
Choir and Orchestra of the Bayreuth Festival
Wilhelm Furtwängler *conductor*

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Beethoven's life and work are customarily divided into three periods – early, middle and late – but only one of his nine symphonies falls into the late period. The Ninth, completed in 1824, only three years before his death, is separated from its predecessors by a gap of over ten years, and is in a style that is strikingly different from any of them. Nevertheless, the chronological gap is not as large as might appear, for even before he had finished his Eighth Symphony in October 1812, he was already thinking about a possible successor. Scattered amongst his sketches from 1812 are brief concepts for nearly a dozen possible symphonies. Three of these are even in D minor, although they show no thematic links with the Ninth Symphony itself, and D minor was only one of several keys being considered at the time.

A few of the elements in the Ninth Symphony can be traced back even earlier – notably the use of Friedrich Schiller's poem *An die Freude* (*To Joy*). Beethoven had been contemplating setting this to music as early as 1793, and may even have made a setting round about 1800, though none survives. Schiller's text re-emerged in Beethoven's sketches in 1812, this time in connection with a work that eventually became the *Namensfeier* Overture. At this stage he noted that he wanted to set not the whole poem but just individual phrases. This plan also came to nothing, and the overture was later completed without the inclusion of any voices; but the idea of including only some sections of the poem, as in the Ninth Symphony, had been born.

It is from 1815 that we find the first thematic reference to the Ninth Symphony: a four-bar sketch in D minor that closely resembles the main fugue theme of the second movement. At this stage there is no sign that Beethoven intended it for a symphony, but in 1817 he received an invitation to compose two new symphonies for the Philharmonic Society and bring them with him to London. Although the visit itself never materialised, it seems that it was the society's invitation that

prompted him to begin working on a new symphony in D minor, and he made several sketches for the first movement that year.

For a long time he made little progress on either of the two projected symphonies. One idea noted down in 1818 is particularly significant, however: 'Pious song in a symphony in the old modes… where the voices enter in the last movement or already in the *Adagio*… In the *Adagio* text Greek myth, ecclesiastical canticle – in the *Allegro* festival of Bacchus.' This extraordinary jumble of ideas was originally planned for the second of the two symphonies for the Philharmonic Society, but the underlying intention of incorporating voices was eventually transferred to the first of them, the Ninth Symphony, in 1822 when Beethoven decided to include selections of verses from Schiller's poem in the finale. This poem, in fact, already contained hints of Greek myth ('Daughter of Elysium'), ecclesiastical canticle ('World, do you sense your Creator?') and Bacchanalian festival of joy, and was therefore an ideal fulfilment of the hazy ideas he had jotted down earlier.

It is easy to forget how revolutionary was the idea of using voices within a symphonic design at the time. The very word 'symphony' had in the eighteenth century meant by definition an instrumental piece: a vocal work such as an opera might include a 'symphony', which would be an exclusively instrumental section. A symphony with voices was therefore virtually a contradiction in terms. Yet Beethoven did not add voices to his symphony simply for the sake of doing something new: they were added to form the culmination of an unusually grand design, where instruments were no longer sufficient on their own. Schiller's text, with such all-embracing phrases as 'the whole world' and even 'above the stars', was therefore a particularly appropriate choice in such a context.

The Ninth Symphony finally took shape in 1823 after the Philharmonic Society had made a fresh offer of 50 pounds for one new symphony (and no visit). The

work emerged as an extraordinary fusion of different ideas from different periods of Beethoven's life: first-movement sketches from 1817; a fugue theme for the second movement resurrected from an abandoned 1815 sketch; and for the finale the idea of voices entering a symphony in the last movement was combined with a poem that he had intended to set for about thirty years, using a form that owed much to his *Choral Fantasia* of 1808. Meanwhile the remaining movement, the third, incorporated two themes that had been conceived entirely separately. The main *Adagio* theme was developed out of one originally devised for the embryonic Tenth Symphony, while another version of the same theme continued to live on in later sketches for that symphony.

The grand design of the Ninth demanded a grand opening idea – but it did not need to be a loud one, and the symphony starts extremely softly, with hushed *tremolo* strings and horns. Yet one can immediately sense its vast scale from the slow harmonic speed: the first chord alone lasts about fifteen bars, during which there is no theme but just fragments of melody that eventually coalesce at the end of a mighty *crescendo*. After such an opening, a compact work would be unthinkable.

In one sketch Beethoven appears to indicate that the first movement characterises despair; and the jagged, plunging outline of the main theme would certainly fit such a mood. Yet there are more optimistic moments that dimly point towards the joyful finale – notably a lovely horn solo in the major near the end, which was one of the first ideas to be sketched.

The second movement is often referred to as a scherzo (literally 'joke') – but this was not Beethoven's title, and the movement is certainly no joke but rather serious in character. The main theme is not far removed in outline from that of the first, for again it falls down before twisting around above the keynote, and there is again little sense of optimism for much of the movement. The middle or 'trio'

section, however, is in D major, and once again seems to give a foretaste of the finale – some observers even see a relationship between its theme and that of the 'Joy' theme to come. After a reprise of the D minor section, the trio sets off a second time, only to be cut short by a dramatic rest and rapid conclusion.

Like the first two movements, the *Adagio* also begins with a short introduction before the main theme. This theme then alternates with a slightly faster triple-time theme, reappearing with increasingly elaborate decorations before a lengthy coda, in which there are further hints of the finale.

The main danger for Beethoven of including voices in the finale was that the work might split in two: a three-movement symphony followed by a grand cantata. He went to much trouble to prevent such a split, partly by planting subtle pointers to the finale in each of the first three movements, and partly by introducing the voices only after lengthy preparation. This preparation initially involves the cellos and double basses playing passages of recitative – a style associated almost exclusively with vocal music – so that the listener is made to feel the absence of words. Another link with the first three movements consists of a recall of a fragment of each one in turn (each followed by an emphatic 'rejection' by the cellos and double basses). Eventually a simple, unharmonised melody is conjured up that sounds as if it needs words adding. After three variations on this melody, a solo voice then enters, rejecting what has gone before with the words 'O friends, not these sounds, but let us sing more pleasing and joyful ones', words written by Beethoven himself. Preparations for Schiller's text are now complete, and the elaborate choral music that ensues seems a natural, almost inevitable, consequence of what has gone before.

The Ninth Symphony received its première in Vienna on 7th May 1824, before a packed and enthusiastic audience. At one point the audience applauded wildly while Beethoven, by now profoundly deaf, stood with his back to them turning

pages, and the contralto soloist had to tug his sleeve to draw his attention to the applause – a poignant moment in his triumph.

The following year Beethoven began contemplating a further concert, making a few more sketches for his Tenth Symphony and a new overture. Both were left far from complete at his death, although there are about 250 bars of sketches for the first movement of the Tenth, and so we have some idea of what he had in mind (it was apparently to be a much more intimate, personal work than the cosmic Ninth, and a performing version by the present writer was premièred in London in 1988). Meanwhile the Ninth took some years to become established in the repertory – partly because of its size and difficulty; but it is now generally regarded as one of the greatest works of all time.

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*Professor of Music, University of Manchester*

**Wilhelm Furtwängler** (1886–1954) is considered to be one of the greatest symphonic and operatic conductors of the 20th century. He was born in Berlin and grew up in Munich, where his father taught at the Ludwig Maximilian University. Wilhelm Furtwängler received a musical education from an early age and was also a fine pianist. Furtwängler saw himself primarily as a composer. He turned to conducting to promote his own works, although these were received with limited enthusiasm and conducting became his main career focus. He made his conducting début with the Kaim Orchestra (now the Munich Philharmonic) in Bruckner's Ninth Symphony. In 1915 he succeeded Arthur Bodanzky at the Mannheim Opera and Music Academy, and in 1920 he succeeded Richard Strauss as conductor of the Berlin Staatskapelle.

After the death of Artur Nikisch, Furtwängler was appointed as his successor with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra (until 1926) and the Berlin Philharmonic, a position he held until 1945 and then again from 1947 until his death. He made his London début in 1924 and his New York début the following year, and was guest conductor of many other major orchestras worldwide, including the Vienna Philharmonic. He appeared at prestigious festivals including Bayreuth and Salzburg. His career remained centred in his native country, however, and he turned down opera directorships in Philadelphia, New York and Vienna because he did not want to leave Germany. He undoubtedly exerted significant influence on many later conductors; the critic Neville Cardus wrote of his approach that 'he did not regard the printed notes of the score as a final statement, but rather as so many symbols of an imaginative conception, ever changing and always to be felt and realised subjectively.'

Among Furtwängler's compositions are three symphonies (1938–41, 1945–46 and 1951–54), a Symphonic Concerto for piano and orchestra (1924–37) and several sonatas for violin and piano.

Although Furtwängler was not a supporter of the National Socialist régime and was known for his support of Jewish musicians, he was the leading conductor to remain in Germany during the Second World War, a decision that caused wide-ranging controversy. By 1947 he had been cleared of all allegations of collaboration with the Nazis.

Among his numerous first performances are Schoenberg's *Variations for orchestra*, Bartók's First Piano Concerto (with the composer as soloist), Hindemith's symphony *Mathis der Maler* (a performance in 1934 that caused considerable tension with the Nazi authorities) Honegger's *Mouvement symphonique No. 3*, Prokofiev's Fifth Piano Concerto (again with the composer as soloist) and Richard Strauss's *Vier letzte Lieder*.

# An die Freude

**BASS**
O Freunde, nicht diese Töne,
sondern lässt uns angenehmere
anstimmen, und freudenvollere!
*(Ludwig van Beethoven)*

**BASS**
Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium;
Wir betreten, feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!

**BASS und CHOR**
Deine Zauber binden wieder,
Was die Mode streng geteilt,
Alle Menschen werden Brüder,
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

**SOLISTEN**
Wem der große Wurf gelungen,
Eines Freundes Freund zu sein,
Wer ein holdes Weib errungen,
Mische seinen Jubel ein!

**SOLISTEN und CHOR**
Ja, wer auch nur eine Seele
Sein nennt auf dem Erdenrund!
Und wer's nie gekonnt, der stehle
Weinend sich aus diesem Bund!

# Ode to Joy

**BASS**
O friends, not these notes,
Let us instead strike up more pleasant
and more joyful ones!
*(Ludwig van Beethoven)*

**BASS**
Joy, exquisite divine spark,
Daughter from Elysium;
Drunk with fire, we enter,
O divine one, your sanctuary!

**BASS and CHOIR**
Your spells once more unite
That which custom strictly separates,
All men become brothers
Wherever your gentle wing touches.

**SOLOISTS**
Whoever has successfully managed
To become the friend of a friend,
Whoever has acquired a wife of good disposition,
Let him contribute his jubilation!

**SOLOISTS and CHOIR**
Indeed, even he who can only call
One soul on earth his own!
And whoever has never managed to do so
Should steal tearfully away from this union!

**SOLISTEN**
Freude trinken alle Wesen
An den Brüsten der Natur,
Alle Guten, alle Bösen
Folgen ihrer Rosenspur.

**SOLISTEN und CHOR**
Küsse gab sie uns und Reben,
Einen Freund, geprüft im Tod;
Wollust ward dem Wurm gegeben,
Und der Cherub steht vor Gott.

**TENOR und CHOR**
Froh, wie seine Sonnen fliegen
Durch des Himmels prächt'gen Plan,
Laufet, Brüder, eure Bahn,
Freudig, wie ein Held zum Siegen.

**CHOR**
Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium;
Wir betreten, feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!

Deine Zauber binden wieder,
Was die Mode streng geteilt,
Alle Menschen werden Brüder,
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

Seid umschlungen, Millionen!
Diesen Kuß der ganzen Welt!
Brüder, über'm Sternenzelt
Muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.

**SOLOISTS**
All creatures imbibe joy
From the breast of nature,
All the good ones, all the bad ones
Follow her path of roses.

**SOLOISTS and CHOIR**
She gave us kisses and wine,
A friend, tested unto death;
The serpent was given ecstasy,
And the cherub stands before God.

**TENOR and CHOIR**
Happily, as his suns fly
Through the firmament in its splendour,
Brothers, go on your way
Joyfully, like a hero to victory.

**CHOIR**
Joy, exquisite divine spark,
Daughter from Elysium;
Drunk with fire, we enter,
O divine one, your sanctuary!

Your spells once more unite
That which custom strictly separates,
All men become brothers
Wherever your gentle wing touches.

Be enfolded, millions!
This kiss is for the entire world!
Brothers, above the vault of the stars
A dear father must dwell.

Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen?
Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt?
Such' ihn überm Sternenzelt!
Über Sternen muss er wohnen.

Seid umschlungen, Millionen!
Diesen Kuß der ganzen Welt!

Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium;
Wir betreten, feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!

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**SOLISTEN und CHOR**
Tochter aus Elysium,
Deine Zauber binden wieder,
Was die Mode streng geteilt,
Alle Menschen werden Brüder,
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

**CHOR**
Seid umschlungen, Millionen!
Diesen Kuß der ganzen Welt!
Brüder, überm Sternenzelt
Muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.

O millions, do you prostrate yourselves?
O world, do you perceive the Creator?
Seek him above the vault of the stars!
He must reside above the stars.

Be enfolded, millions!
This kiss is for the entire world!

Joy, exquisite divine spark,
Daughter from Elysium;
Drunk with fire, we enter,
O divine one, your sanctuary!

O millions, do you prostrate yourselves?
O world, do you perceive the Creator?
Seek him above the vault of the stars!
Brothers, above the vault of the stars
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Tochter aus Elysium.
Freude, schöner Götterfunken.
*(Friedrich Schiller)*

Be enfolded, millions!
This kiss is for the entire world!
Joy, exquisite divine spark,
Daughter from Elysium.
Joy, exquisite divine spark.
*(Friedrich Schiller)*

Recording Data

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BIS Records AB, Stationsvägen 20, SE-184 50 Åkersberga, Sweden
Tel.: +46 8 544 102 30 **info@bis.se** **www.bis.se**

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