

SALES-INFORMATION AUGUST 2026



BEETHOVEN: SYMPHONY No. 5 in C minor
R. STRAUSS: EIN HELDENLEBEN (A HERO'S LIFE)

Live recording: Munich, Philharmonie im Gasteig, 17./18. January 1990

Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks
SEIJI OZAWA CONDUCTOR

- **Booklet:** in German / in English
- **1 CD - Jewelcase with O-Card**
- **Product Number: 900238**
- **Total Time: 76'03 min.**

Street Date: 07 August 2026

SEIJI OZAWA conducts

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN: SYMPHONY No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67

RICHARD STRAUSS: EIN HELDENLEBEN (A HERO'S LIFE), Op. 40

The Japanese conductor Seiji Ozawa (1935–2024) conducted the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra in Munich only twice – yet on both occasions, nothing less than musical history was made. In July 1983, Ozawa conducted Stravinsky's *Le sacre du printemps* and Beethoven's *Egmont Overture* in the Herkulesaal of the Munich Residenz, as well as Beethoven's First Piano Concerto with Martha Argerich as the soloist – a performance that has already been released on CD (CD 900701). Then, in January 1990, he appeared at the Philharmonie im Gasteig with the programme presented here for the first time on CD, featuring striking and unprecedented interpretations of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and Strauss's tone poem *Ein Heldenleben*.

The first reviewer of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, E. T. A. Hoffmann, marvelled at the dramatic human struggle 'through night towards the light' it expresses, seeing it as shaped in a purely musical manner, with structural density and the utmost rigour. It was not until the second half of the 19th century that the work became known as the "Fate Symphony", in accordance with the heroic image of the man and artist Ludwig van Beethoven, which had by then become established. Accordingly, the symphony was said to depict Beethoven's suffering and triumph as he wrestles titanically with fate, especially his personal fate of deafness. The Romantic notion of the artist as a suffering outsider was subsequently projected onto Beethoven's life and work – and especially onto his Fifth.

Richard Strauss's tone poem *Ein Heldenleben*, composed when he took up the post of Court Kapellmeister in Berlin, also deals with the life of a hero.

With this work, too, Strauss (like many of his contemporaries) sought to build on Beethoven's legacy and to extend the composer's powerful and expressive musical language using modern means. The tone poem *A Hero's Life*, which received its world premiere on March 3, 1899 in Frankfurt am Main, could, according to a

letter by Strauss, be interpreted as a modern counterpart to the Eroica, which is also based on classical sonata form. The score itself lacks the programmatic explanations for the six sections, which were only formulated just before the premiere – presumably not even by Strauss himself. Nevertheless, the composer, who was often identified with his 'hero', was accused of musical self-aggrandisement.

- Mature and compelling performances of Beethoven's impressive Fifth Symphony and Strauss's tone poem 'Ein Heldenleben'
- Concerts recorded on January 17 and 18, 1990 at Munich's Philharmonie im Gasteig
- A further example of the organic collaboration between Seiji Ozawa and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra

SYMPHONIEORCHESTER DES BAYERISCHEN RUNDFUNKS
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From the Rehearsals 01/1990:

