

CAL-352



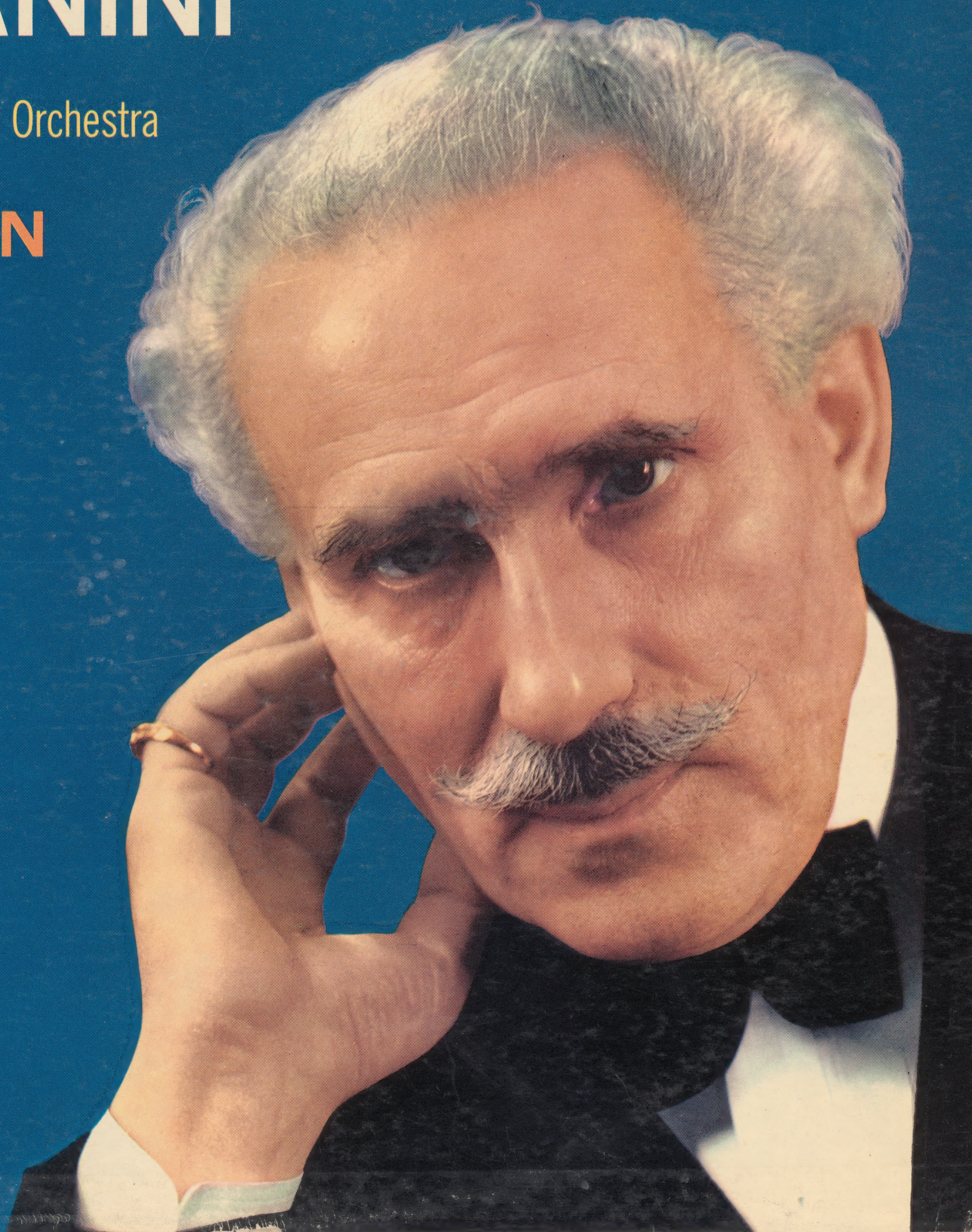
LONG PLAY 33 $\frac{1}{2}$ RPM

TOSCANINI

and the
Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra
of New York

BEETHOVEN

Seventh Symphony



Beethoven SYMPHONY No. 7, IN A, Op. 92

ARTURO TOSCANINI

and the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York

WBUR - 90.9 FM
Boston University
630 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02215

It is something more than ten years ago since a book appeared (1946) with the following argument about records dating from a previous period: "Let them be marketed in a form to compare with the Modern Library editions, Pocket Books, or the Penguin publications. No one has to pay premium prices these days to read Fitzgerald's *Great Gatsby* or Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* merely because he didn't buy the original edition."

As the author of the foregoing as well as of this commentary, I find it a mark of progress (where the public's access to great music is concerned) to see that hope being realized in such an issue as this. It is a movement that has been under way for some time, and from more than one source, but few previous releases dramatize the dawn of a new day for the record buyer as graphically as this one.

In the same volume (*New Guide to Recorded Music*), the Toscanini-New York Philharmonic-Symphony Beethoven No. 7 (then bearing album number DM-317) was my choice among all versions of the work then available. It was all of ten years old at the time, but it was still admired for "insistent vitality," "brilliant energy" and the "intoxication" of the finale . . . not to mention "irreplaceable individuality." These are large phrases to apply to any interpretation, but a recent rehearing of the performance in its altered mechanical form induces no urge to change a word of them.

What we are dealing with, in fact, is a historic memento of Toscanini's affiliation with an orchestra to which he gave ten years of his life — 1925-1936 — and which responded with the ten best years of its life. April 29, 1936, marked the end of that affiliation when, with Jascha Heifetz as violin soloist, Toscanini bade New York "farewell" in a Beethoven-Wagner program that those who were present will never forget. (It was hardly imaginable at the time that he would come back to New York for another seventeen years of superb music making. That, of course, is another story.)

On April 9, 1936, Toscanini and the Philharmonic assembled in Carnegie Hall for the recording session that produced this memorable disc. It was, in all probability, his final large-scale project with that orchestra; in any case, it summed up the long artistic journey they had made together, in New York, on tours of America, and on a famous junket to Europe. It was the distillation of more than a dozen previous performances of the Beethoven Seventh, three in days directly preceding the recording.

This was the Philharmonic of which Mishel Piastro was the concertmaster and Alfred Wallenstein the first 'cellist.

Its section leaders included such famous men in orchestral lore as Bruno Labate, oboe; John Amans, flute; Bruno Jaenicke, horn; Simeon Bellison, clarinet; Benjamin Kohon, bassoon; and Harry Glantz, trumpet (a member of the NBC Symphony when Toscanini retired in 1954). Then, as now, the percussion section was led by Saul Goodman.

All was in readiness for what should have been a historic, perhaps even that rare thing, a perfect recording. Historic it undoubtedly was; but the odd fact is that this reissue is closer to perfection than the issue that was rapturously received by the public in the fall of 1936. To cope with Toscanini's desires for continuity in performance, a system had been devised for switching from one turntable to another, with a minute pause between. To make sure that nothing was lost, the relay side was started perhaps half a minute before the end of the preceding disc. Nothing was lost: but, in those pre-tape days, there was no way of "editing" a take, and every time after that a music lover played his Toscanini-Philharmonic Beethoven Seventh, the irritating pauses reminded us that the machine was still master over man.

Oddly, too, the improved result is now available at a fraction of the original cost which was, for five twelve-inch shellac discs, \$10. At the time of the 1946 comment, increased distribution of records had brought the price of the album down to \$5.50. With the time lapses removed through transfer to tape, and the performance recut for long play usage, the whole performance is now available for the cost, originally, of one of its parts! This even exceeds the Modern Library concept in giving us something more enjoyable than the original at vastly less cost.

One further fact relative to the recorded quality also relates to Maestro Toscanini's own exacting standards. To have a product that would qualify for his approval, the engineers had to preserve an amount of dynamic contrast to suggest the orchestra as he heard it. The appearance of the album attested to their success: my comment—"the volume range is excessively wide, resulting in almost inaudible pianissimos and shattering fortes"—to the limitation of the reproductive means then available. But it was precisely the excesses, as they then seemed, which provided the resources for today's lifelike product. On average equipment, more will be heard than from the best of 1936; and on a typical hi-fi unit of today, an amazing replica of the bygone Philharmonic and its peerless chief emerges. Tonal gold has rarely sold for so little per precious minute.

Notes by IRVING KOLODIN
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Other TOSCANINI albums available on RCA CAMDEN and RCA VICTOR labels:

Toscanini and the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York: **The Sorcerer's Apprentice** (*Dukas*); **Semiramide Overture** (*Rossini*); **La Traviata: Preludes to Acts 1 and 3** (*Verdi*); **Siegfried Idyll** (*Wagner*).

CAL-309 \$1.98

Toscanini and the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York: **Variations on a Theme by Haydn** (*Brahms*); **Barber of Seville Overture** (*Rossini*); **"Haffner" Symphony** (*Mozart*); **Scherzo from "A Midsummer Night's Dream"** (*Mendelssohn*).

CAL-326 \$1.98

Symphony No. 1 in C, Op. 21; Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125 ("Choral") (with Reader) (*Beethoven*). Farrell, Merriman, Peerce, Scott, Robert Shaw Chorale, Shaw, Dir.

LM-6009 \$7.98

Nutcracker Suite, Op. 71a (*Tchaikovsky*); **The Skaters Waltz** (*Waldteufel*); **William Tell: Overture** (*Rossini*).

LM-1986 \$3.98

Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67; Symphony No. 8 in F, Op. 93 (*Beethoven*).

LM-1757 \$3.98

Pines of Rome; *Fountains of Rome (*Respighi*).

LM-1768 \$3.98; ERB-58 \$2.49

Pictures at an Exhibition (*Moussorgsky*); ***Psyche and Eros** (*Franck*).

LM-1838 \$3.98; ERB-35 \$2.49

Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 95 ("From the New World") (*Dvořák*).

LM-1778 \$3.98; ERC-1 \$2.98

La Mer; *Iberia (*Debussy*).

LM-1833 \$3.98; ERB-48 \$2.49

Aïda (Complete) (with Libretto) (*Verdi*). Assandri, Gustavson, Harbour, Nelli, Scott, Stich Randall, Tucker, Valdengo, Shaw, Chorus Dir.

LM-6132 \$11.98

*Not included on ERB Version

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A blunted or chipped needle can permanently damage your most valuable records. A worn needle will impair the quality of sound reproduction you hear. Make sure your needle is in good condition before you play this record. If in doubt, have it checked by your dealer—or buy a new needle.



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Beethoven
SYMPHONY No. 7, in A, Op. 92

CAL
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SIDE
1

- 1—First Movement: Poco sostenuto; Vivace
- 2—Second Movement: Allegretto

Arturo Toscanini
and the Philharmonic-Symphony
Orchestra of New York

G3RP-7986

LONG 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ PLAY

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Beethoven
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SIDE
2

1—Third Movement: Presto meno assai; Presto
2—Fourth Movement: Allegro con brio

Arturo Toscanini
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G3RP-7987

LONG 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ PLAY