

The background of the album cover is a detailed Romantic-style painting of a forest. In the center, a group of people in 19th-century attire are walking along a path. A man in a dark coat and hat leads a woman in a long, light-colored dress. To their left, a woman in a blue dress and hat is walking. In the foreground, a small, light-colored dog is running towards the left. The forest is dense with tall, slender trees and a thick canopy of green leaves. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating dappled light on the path and the ground. The overall mood is peaceful and idyllic, reflecting the 'Pastoral' theme of the symphonies.

Beethoven
Symphonies Nos.
4 & 6 'Pastoral'

London Symphony
Orchestra

Bernard Haitink

alto

Ludwig van Beethoven

Symphony No. 4 in B-Flat major, Op. 60

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|-------|
| [1] | I. Adagio - Allegro vivace | 11:18 |
| [2] | II. Adagio | 9:05 |
| [3] | III. Allegro vivace | 5:37 |
| [4] | IV. Allegro ma non troppo | 6:40 |

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

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| [5] | I. Erwachen heiterer Empfindungen bei der Ankunft auf dem Lande. Allegro ma non troppo | 11:38 |
| [6] | II. Szene am Bach. Andante molto mosso | 11:48 |
| [7] | III. Lustiges Zusammensein der Landleute. Allegro | 4:59 |
| [8] | IV. Gewitter, Sturm. Allegro | 3:31 |
| [9] | V. Hirtengesang - Frohe und dankbare Gefühle nach dem Sturm. Allegretto | 9:32 |

London Symphony Orchestra

Bernard Haitink, conductor

Recorded April 2006 (Symphony No. 4) and Nov 2005 (Symphony No. 6) at The Barbican

Producer: James Mallinson

Engineer: Jonathan Stokes

Mastered for Alto by Paul Arden-Taylor

During the summer of 1806, **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827) was staying at his friend and patron Prince Carl von Lichnovsky's estate in Grätz, Upper Silesia. Towards the end of his visit both men paid a visit to another keen admirer of Beethoven's music, Count Franz von Oppersdorff who lived nearby in Ober-Glogau. Von Oppersdorff was himself a keen musician who kept a private orchestra; indeed, it was said that he only hired servants that were proficient in music-making. During Beethoven's stay the orchestra played his Second Symphony, a particular favourite of the Count and Beethoven was commissioned to compose a new symphony for the private orchestra. At the time Beethoven was working on a new symphony (later to become the Fifth) but decided instead to shelve that project and begin a new work in lighter vein for the Count. Before returning to the Fifth, to add to what was already a very busy year Beethoven would compose not only the Fourth Symphony but also the Fourth Piano Concerto and the Violin Concerto (other works from that hectic but, on the whole, happy period include the Appassionata Sonata, the three Razumovsky Quartets and extensive revisions to his opera Fidelio.)

However, despite having paid for exclusive performing rights, the Fourth Symphony was not premiered by von Oppendorff's orchestra but was given a private first performance in March 1807 at the house of another of Beethoven's patrons, Prince Lobkowitz. The following

month it was performed before the paying public at the Burgtheater in Vienna. Oppendorff was understandably enraged that Beethoven had entrusted the premiere to another and was only slightly appeased when Beethoven duly dedicated the symphony to “the noble Silesian nobleman Count Franz von Oppersdorff”. Sandwiched between the titanic third and fifth symphonies (Robert Schumann likened it to a slender Greek maiden between two Norse giants), Beethoven’s Symphony No.4 in B flat major, Op.60 has often been overlooked. Critics over the years have been unable to determine the reason for its comparative neglect. Felix Mendelssohn programmed it whenever possible in his Leipzig Gewandhaus concerts but Carl Maria von Weber, who attended an early performance, clearly found it eccentric and dull: ‘short disjointed ideas, at the rate of three or four notes per quarter of an hour’ and a ‘furious finale, in which the only requisite is that there should be no ideas for the hearer to make out’. Modern academics continue to be perplexed about the Fourth Symphony’s place in musical history: Dr Robert Simpson commented on Schumann’s famous interpretation: “It is neither maidenly nor Greek: it is that of a giant who performs relaxed athletic movements with gigantic ease and fluency.” Another academic Robert Greenberg, unable to understand the Fourth’s comparative neglect, wrote that if a contemporary of Beethoven’s had written this work, it would be considered their masterpiece but that for Beethoven, it was still a work in search of an audience.

“Nobody can love the country as much as I do. For surely woods, trees and rocks produce the echo which man desires to hear.” So wrote Beethoven in 1810 to Therese Malfati. Striding through the countryside was indeed one of Beethoven’s greatest pleasures and the sights and sounds were a great source of inspiration; every now and then he would take a scrap of paper from his pocket and scribble down a musical idea before continuing his walk.

Writing music descriptive of the countryside was scarcely a novel idea: Vivaldi, Handel, Gluck, Rameau and Haydn all depicted the wide open spaces and the natural elements in their music and Justin Heinrich Knecht (1752-1817), a composer almost totally forgotten today, had previously composed a symphony entitled *La portrait musical de la nature* for which he had designated titles for each movement.

Like Knecht, Beethoven also allocated titles to each movement of the ‘Pastoral Symphony’ and the last three movements follow each other without a break. The opening movement is given the following heading: ‘Pleasant feelings which awaken in men upon their arrival in the countryside’. One can easily imagine town visitors ambling through the countryside, happily chatting and only very occasionally raising their voices. The second movement is named ‘Scene by a brook’. This is one of Beethoven’s most gentle works and depicts the countryside visitor slowing the pace to an idyllic lazy stroll. Attention is drawn to the nearby birdsong, in particular the nightingale, the quail and the

cuckoo. Next, in 'merry gathering of country folk' the countryside visitor comes across a party in the village. There is drink involved (the oboe soloist is definitely the worse for wear) and a brief scuffle seems to break out in the Trio section. But then the merrymaking is interrupted by 'thunder and storm' (fourth movement) which eventually clears the air, leaving the shepherds expressing in the fifth movement 'salutary feelings combined with thanks to the Deity.'

The concert at which Beethoven's Symphony No.6 in F major, Op. 68 known as the 'Pastoral' received its first performance has gone down in history as one of the most significant musical events of all time. Not only was the Pastoral Symphony given for the first time, but also his Fifth Symphony and the Piano Concerto No.4 as well as two movements of the Mass in C, the concert aria Ah perfido and the Choral Fantasia. Unfortunately, for many audience members it was an evening to forget as the orchestra was badly under-rehearsed and there was little or no heating in the Theater an der Wien that December night in 1808.

Bernard Haitink (b. 1929) is universally recognised as one of the very greatest conductors. He began his musical career studying violin and conducting, making his conducting debut with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra (1954). Two years later he deputised for Giulini with the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, becoming their first conductor in 1959 and later Principal Conductor. Haitink has been Chief or Principal Conductor of other orchestras including the

London Philharmonic (1967-79), Boston Symphony (1995-2004) and the Staatskapelle Dresden (2002-4) and has held positions with many other leading orchestras. Haitink was also Musical Director at both Glyndebourne and the Royal Opera House.

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