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CLASSICAL PLAYLIST

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Manfred Honeck leading the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall in February 2010.
Credit Hiroyuki Ito for The New York Times

BEETHOVEN: Symphonies No. 5 and 7

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra; Manfred Honeck, conductor
(Reference Recordings)

Ninety seconds is all it takes to understand that Manfred Honeck's is no sanitized Beethoven: the plethora of colorations, articulations and moods through which he forces the Fifth's famous motto sees to that. Every phrase, every balance has been thought through in interventionist readings that are idiosyncratic but fully attuned to the spirit, if not the letter, of the scores. Despite superb playing and audio quality, Beethoven so Romantic won't convince everybody. Still, this partnership seems incapable of laying down an ordinary recording. *(David Allen)*