

Beethoven: Symphonies – No 5 in C minor, Op 67; No 7 in A major, Op 92



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Reminders of Wilhelm Furtwängler may arise as the opening Fate motif knocks at the door very majestically; and does so throughout the first movement of No 5. Manfred Honeck takes his cue from biographer Anton Schindler; despite the fast speed specified, Beethoven had wanted these famous bars slowed down. But they don't become fractured interjections because Honeck astutely binds the structure together while also following Beethoven's metronome markings. If he is a fraction too fast at the beginning of the fourth movement, the stature of the work isn't compromised. Nor is that of No 7, in an interpretation at the highest level of musicianship, Honeck outstanding in his grasp of the wide canvas as he is of the details within it. Listen for them in the Allegretto second movement, every phrase subtly accented and inflected, rhythms always supple, instrumental lines unerringly balanced the fabric transparent. This isn't mere time-beating. It's conducting.

—Nalen Anthoni