

# philharmonia orchestra

## **Riccardo Muti celebrates the Philharmonia Orchestra's 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

*Musical extract*

### **Riccardo Muti - conductor**

My first rehearsal with the Philharmonia was in November 1972. I remember that this was my début in London and I was very nervous to meet this famous orchestra in a city like London that was and still is one of the musical capitals of the world.

*Musical extract*

In the beginning I was very shocked about this invitation, but because the invitation came from the orchestra, from the musicians of the orchestra, after three months of thinking (yes, no, no, yes, no), I decided to accept.

*Musical extract*

We started together, to create seasons that would attract interest, to help new generations, new young people to come to the concerts, and to start also to make records. And little, by little, with the help of new people we made hundreds of recordings, not only in the symphonic repertoire, but also in the operatic repertoire. So the family became a wonderful family and so every time I was able to come back and to make music with them I was always impressed by the fact that the orchestra has kept the high standard of quality, this special sound that always was distinctive of the Philharmonia.

### **Riccardo Muti in rehearsal**

They were fantastic years, you know, the 70s. We started from niente [nothing] and of course I didn't make jokes, I worked! OK, allora [now]! Now comes... OK I will go back now to the 70s. OK, allora. Now, lettera [letter] B, andiamo [let's go]! Lettera B!

### **Gordon Hunt – Oboe**

He is always at the service of the music and he never demands more from the players than he demands from himself. It's always been like that, right from the first time I met him.

*Musical extract*

### **Ann Barber – Cello**

He's very particular, but he smiles now, you know. He does it with joy, and everybody loves him.

*Musical extract*

### **Riccardo Muti**

Every time I come back I feel like the old family is still here, even if there are many new musicians because years have gone. We are talking about 38 years ago when I started with the Philharmonia. This tradition of the old players of the 70s still remains here with new spirit, with new ideas, but because some of the players of the past are still here, this tradition has never been interrupted.

### **Riccardo Muti in rehearsal**

Lettera [letter] Dora [D], one F. Because [sings] and suddenly – pah! – fortissimo [very loud]! Possiamo fare [Can we do] from [sings] ... Before Dora [D], uno, due, tre, quattro, cinque, sei, sette, otto, nove, dieci [counts to 10 in Italian], 10 bars before...

### **Riccardo Muti**

The experience I have today is different from the experience of a young conductor in 1972. So practically, when I go in front of the Philharmonia or in front of other orchestras, I don't have to prove... Or in my mind, it's not that I have to prove to the musicians that I am a good conductor or I can make a good interpretation, it's just that immediately I can make music. This is a big, important achievement that you can do with an orchestra that believes in you, and you believe in the orchestra, and I felt today even if I have seen many musicians – there are new musicians that I have seen for the first time – that there was a trust. They were waiting for me, I was waiting for them, and immediately we could make music. I don't know if it was good or bad from my point of view, but certainly we were one body together, two persons in one, immediately.

*Musical extract*

### **Gordon Hunt – Oboe**

Both in rehearsals and concerts he is superbly clear so that when he decides to shape a phrase a little bit differently there is no doubt about the way it's going and phrasing is one of his big things.

*Musical extract*

### **Riccardo Muti**

It's always difficult to explain what is the sound of the orchestra. The fact that Karajan was here, that Klemperer was here with the orchestra for many years, left this kind of, I would not say Germanic sound, but a depth in the sound and a roundness in the sound, and a cantabilità [lyric quality], a way of singing, that makes this orchestra very, very special.

And so I think the *Eroica* in this case, it's a gesture of admiration for what the musicians of different generations going back to the 50s have made. So it was a form of heroism to be able to keep this orchestra alive in a moment, especially when the orchestra could collapse after the departure of Karajan in the period of the New Philharmonia. So now the Philharmonia is back and considering the history of these musicians, we can say that they were heroes – and that's *Eroica*.

*Musical extract*

What is important is at this stage of my life is to bring music to the people because – I really believe this. I've said this for 40 years – that music is the best ambassador today to bring people together because musicians of different languages, different races, different colours of skin, different religions, they can fight about many things, but when they sit together and they play the same music, and they express the same feelings, immediately a kind of friendship, and love, and respect, and mutual understanding happens.

*Musical extract*

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