Beethoven
Fidelio
Teatro Colón - September 1958
Gré Brouwenstijn, Hans Hopf, Paul Schöffler, Arnold van Mill, Olga Chelavine

Berlioz
Les Troyens
London - June/July 1947
Marian Ferrer, Jean Giraud, Charles Cammon, Yvonne Corks, Franz Vroons

Bizet
Carmen
Teatro Colón - July 1958
Jean Madeira, Pier Miranda Ferraro, Giuseppe Taddei

Bizet
La folle fille de Perth
BBC studio broadcast - 5/6 June 1949
Owen Carley, Norman Walker, Lorelly Dyer, Richard Lewis

Cherubini
Les deux Journées
BBC broadcast, 19 December 1947
Pier Giannetti, Jeanine Micheau, Charles Paul, Eugene Regnier

Delius
A Village Romeo and Juliet
BBC studio broadcasts - 23/25 April 1948
Marisa Ferrer, Jean Giraudeau, Charles Cambon, Yvonne Corks, Frederick Sharp

Bizet
La jolie fille de Perth
BBC studio broadcast - July 1949
Pier Giannetti, Jeanine Micheau, Charles Paul, Eugene Regnier

Händel
Messiah
London 1947
Elise Sudjady, Marjorie Thomas, Heddle Nash, Trevor Anthony

Mozart
Die Zauberflöte
Teatro Colón - September 1958
Pilas Lorenzetti, Anton Dermota, Rita Streich, Arnold van Mill, Walter Berry

Offenbach
Hoffmannes Erzählungen
BBC soundrack - 1951
Rudolf Schock, Rita Streich, Josef Metternich

Puccini
La Bohème (Act IV)
Columbia 1935
Heddle Nash, Lisa Perl (Dora Labelle), Stella Andrea, John Brownlee

Saint-Saëns
Samson et Dalila
Teatro Colón - 3 August 1958
Hilde Konetzni, Richard Tauber, Heinrich Tesmer, Fritz Kreis

Smetana
Die verkaufte Braut
ROH Covent Garden, London - 1 May 1939
Hilde Konetzni, Richard Tauber, Heinrich Tesmer, Fritz Kreis

Strauss
Ariadne auf Naxos
Edinburgh International Festival - 23 August 1950
Hilde Zadek, Ilse Hollweg, Peter Anders

Wagner
Eléktus
London 1947
Erna Schlüter, Elisabeth Höngen, Ljuba Welitsch, Paul Schöffler

Verdi
Aida
ROH Covent Garden, London - 24 May 1939
Maria Casiglia, Berruccio Gigli, Ebe Stignani, Armando Borghi

Orpheus
Teatro Colón - 4 July 1958
Ramin Vinay, Giuseppe Taddei, Antonietta Stella

Wagner
Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg
ROH Covent Garden - 20 May 1936
Rudolf Bockelmann, Tessa Lemitz, Torsten Rolf

Tristan und Isolde
ROH Covent Garden - June 1937
Lauritz Melchior, Kirsten Flagstad, Sven Nilsson, Paul Schöffler, Herbert Janssen, Margarete Klitz, Karin Branzell

Orchestral works
Mozart
Symphonies 31, 40, 41 - London 1937

Sibelius
Symphony 2 - London 1954

Delius
Piano Concerto - London 1946 (with Betty Humby Beecham, piano)
We have chosen here a selection of signature works less readily available and added all five of the operas from his one season (1958) at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. The diversity of those selections is remarkable; few other conductors have offered so nearly a comprehensive view of the world of opera as Sir Thomas. None may have done so with such consistent excellence.

In the concert hall he championed Delius and Sibelius; in the opera house, it was Richard Strauss; everywhere, he pressed for recognition of the works of French composers. Where his contemporaries wrote for the instrumental sound to which both the conductor and his audience were attuned, they needed no adaptation. But older masters - Handel and Haydn very much included - needed to be shaped to his audience's expectations. Even Mozart's operas were fine-tuned a bit as his classic recording of Die Entführung aus dem Serail attests. But with others of distant generations, he synthesized what was needed. And his judgement proved correct with his audiences if not always with the critics.

Despite the decades since Beecham's recordings were eagerly awaited, many are still in print in excellent transfers. It would be foolish as well as gratuitous (to say nothing of risky) to include the La Bohème or the Carmen with Victoria de los Angeles here. There is little doubt that they will remain in the EMI catalogue and, if issued by others, will undoubtedly be reconstructed as well as technology allows. Rather, we have taken advantage of the recent availability of recordings from his one season at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires on this disc. In the same vein, we have chosen less available and more interesting examples where options were offered: the German-language sound track of The Tales of Hoffmann, the broadcast A Village Romeo and Juliet rather than the studio; his second recording of Messiah. If these intrigue or inspire the listener, the alternatives are reasonably available. Had we reversed the selections, the listener would have found locating the ones used here far more difficult.