Public access description

This is one of three figurines by the British sculptor David Wynne capturing different poses of the British conductor, impresario, musical director and stage producer Sir Thomas Beecham (1979-1961). Beecham was a self-taught musician who nevertheless became one of the first British conductors of international repute. He persuaded his wealthy father to bring the Diaghilev Ballets Russes to England in 1911, conducting for them himself. He rarely made any concessions to dancers however, and when conducting for the Camargo Society in the 1930s he took the Dance of the Cygnets from Swan Lake at about four times the normal speed, remarking with satisfaction: 'That made the bastards hop'. He set up the Beecham Opera Company during the First World War, the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1932, and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in 1947.

David Wynne (b.1926) was also self-taught and started work as a sculptor in 1949 having read zoology at University and served in the Royal Navy. He had several one-man shows and exhibitions from the 1950s onwards and his public commissions include the bronze Tyne God at Newcastle upon Tyne and the Boy with a Dolphin on the Thames Embankment by Albert Bridge. His 1957 portrait bronze head of Sir Thomas Beecham, and separate bronzes of his hands, are in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery.

Descriptive line

Bronze figurine of the conductor Sir Thomas Beecham (1879-1961) by David Wynne (b.1926).

Physical description

Cast bronze figurine of the conductor Sir Thomas Beecham standing on a podium, his right arm up in the air at chest height in front of him, holding a baton in his right hand, his left arm raised above his shoulder, the fingers of his left hand held together making a curved shape in the air.

Dimensions

Height: 15.2 cm, Width: 18.8 cm maximum width, Depth: 3.7 cm of base, Width: 3.4 cm of base

Museum number

S.286-1980

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O116928/sculpture-wynne-david/