

VERDI

REQUIEM

- 1 Requiem Aeternam (4:33)
- 2 Kyrie Eleison (3:19)
- 3 Dies Irae (2:17)
- 4 Tuba Mirum - Mors Stupebit (3:09)
- 5 Liber Scriptus - Dies Irae (4:32)
- 6 Quid Sum Miser (3:14)
- 7 Rex Tremendae (3:14)
- 8 Recordare (3:49)
- 9 Ingemisco (3:03)
- 10 Confutatis Maledictis - Dies Irae (5:11)
- 11 Lacrimosa (5:55)
- 12 Domine Jesu Christe (3:57)
- 13 Hostias Et Preces (5:36)
- 14 Sanctus (2:44)
- 15 Agnus Dei (4:32)
- 16 Lux Aeterna (5:41)
- 17 Libera Me - Dies Irae (4:56)
- 18 Requiem Aeternam (2:34)
- 19 Libera Me (5:29)

Soloists:
Herva Nelli - *soprano*
Fedora Barbieri - *mezzo-soprano*
Giuseppe di Stefano - *tenor*
Cesare Siepi - *bass*

The Robert Shaw Chorale
NBC Symphony Orchestra

conductor **Arturo Toscanini**

Concert of 27 January 1951
Carnegie Hall, New York City

A stereo reconstruction using two separate
mono recordings made by NBC and Carnegie
Hall using differently-positioned microphones.

Unedited source recordings supplied by Paul ("old east sider") and others

Stereo reconstruction and XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, June-July 2010

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Arturo Toscanini

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TOSCANINI

CONDUCTS

VERDI'S REQUIEM

IN STEREO

HERVA NELLI
FEDORA BARBIERI
GIUSEPPE DI STEFANO
CESARE SIEPI

NBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
ROBERT SHAW CHORALE

LIVE AT CARNEGIE HALL,
27TH JANUARY 1951



TOSCANINI'S 1951 VERDI REQUIEM - IN STEREO



A normal stereo recording, at its most simple level, is best made using two microphones carefully placed and directed in order to create the most naturalistic stereophonic effect. The two outputs are recorded onto two tracks or channels which run concurrently – in 1951 this would have meant two tracks on one tape, had the technology been available to recording engineers at the time. Because the two tracks are physically side-by-side on a single tape and read by a single head, any fluctuation in tape speed will not cause a divergence in the juxtaposition of the two channels and the stereo image will remain absolutely stable.

By contrast, this Verdi recording begins with two microphones which have been placed independently of each other to create two separate recordings. Each microphone would have been positioned to record the performance, but it's safe to assume both aimed to record the entire ensemble, rather than concentrating on the left or right hand side of the stage. As such we almost certainly don't have what recording engineers term a 'coincident pair'. (Where they were actually positioned is anyone's guess.)

Next we have the two independent recording machines, each with its own minute speed fluctuations, something which will be further exacerbated on replay. Without some kind of time-code locking, no two analogue recorders or replay machines will ever stay perfectly synchronised, so our ideal of two channels on one tape and one replay head is also lost. To add another complication to this already complex picture, one of the two recordings appears to be 'straight', whereas the other has had some kind of 'gain riding' – raising the volume levels of the quieter sections and attenuating the levels of the louder sections. Finally, and unsurprisingly, both have different tonal characteristics (different microphones and recording equipment) and both have emerged in differing states of disrepair some six decades after the event.

To attempt to deal with all of these issues would have perhaps been an insurmountable task until very recently indeed. The key technologies which have made the present release possible are only recently developed – and though no doubt further advances might at some day in the future make this kind of work simpler, and possibly produce better results, I think the results here are truly something to marvel at and savour. I try to remain modest here – I have been the mere manipulator of tools I could not hope to construct.

Now although an 'accidental stereo' recording such as this cannot match an intentional one, it is clear by switching between the two individual mono channels and the stereo hybrid that a massive leap has been made on behalf of the listener. At its best, and this is true for long sections of the recording, the stereo is remarkably convincing and adds hugely to the experience of the listener. At its lesser moments there is some blurring of the picture, some apparent wandering of the image, but although the fine detail of soundstage is lost, the impact rarely diminishes.

One can but hope that the discovery of these two independent recordings of this concert may lead to other similar instances coming to light. In the meantime one can only marvel at the good fortune that such an important concert recording turned out to have a long-hidden partner, ready to be reconstructed into the dramatic and thrilling musical document we present here. My thanks again go out to those who have freely contributed source recordings for this project, who discovered that such a reconstruction was possible, and took the first experimental steps in the realisation of this project.

NOTES BY ANDREW ROSE - FULL NOTES ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM