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# TOSCANINI

## CONDUCTS MOZART

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### Piano Concerto No. 27 in B flat, K595

Rudolf Serkin, piano

New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra

1 Broadcast Introduction (1:25)

2 1st mvt. - Allegro (12:37)

3 2nd mvt. - Larghetto (8:38)

4 3rd mvt. - Allegro (8:32)

Live broadcast from Carnegie Hall, New York, Sunday 23rd February 1936

### Symphony No. 29 in A, K201

NBC Symphony Orchestra

5 1st mvt. - Allegro moderato (4:49)

6 2nd mvt. - Andante (5:08)

7 3rd mvt. - Menuetto (3:01)

8 4th mvt. - Allegro con spirito (3:24)

Live broadcast from NBC Studio 8H, New York, 3rd September 1944

Transfers and XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, April-May 2009

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Arturo Toscanini

Total duration: 47:34 ©2009 Pristine Audio.

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**The recording here of Mozart's 27th Piano Concerto** came at the end of Rudolf Serkin's first brief tour of the USA as a concert soloist - the entire tour lasted just two weeks and culminated in three concerts at Carnegie Hall with Toscanini, in his final year with the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra.

The Toscanini concerts featured Serkin playing first the Beethoven 4th Concerto and then the Mozart. The third of the three concerts was broadcast, and an almost-complete acetate disc recording has survived of this historic performance. We were able to source a high-quality tape copy of these discs, though alas the quality of the tape does little to improve the damage done to the discs over the years.

The restoration of this recording presented me with one of the greatest challenges so far in my career. Such were the obstacles and the slow pace of work that I frequently considered stopping and moving onto something else. However, this is not only a most important historical document, but also a particularly fine performance, and for both of these reasons I persevered.

In addition to numerous very heavy clicks and electrical interference, a large portion of the music, especially through the second and third movements, was heavily compromised by repeated, distorted disc damage, cutting right through the musical frequencies to the point of near-oblivation. Such was the nature of this incredibly intrusive and unpleasant noise that it occupied for the most part a near complete revolution of the original disc, thus making listening a very uncomfortable experience, especially through the quiet second movement.

I have attempted, using the most up-to-date digital computer methods available, to repair as much of this damage as is currently possible. All too often the simple removal of noise reveals little or nothing below, and one is forced to dig deep into the sound patterns to try and find traces of individual harmonics so as to rebuild the sound of the piano and orchestra.

The recording was also missing several sections of music. One begins six bars before the cadenza at the end of the first movement, and runs partway into that solo section. Others are briefer and occur during the finale when orchestra and soloist were playing together. I was able to merge in another more recent recording, sonically treated so as to mimic the sound of the Serkin/Toscanini, and these have filled those gaps remarkably convincingly (almost to the point of being undetectable) in the last movement. However, such is the nature of the cadenza, where one is listening specifically to a display of personality and virtuosity on the part of the soloist, that I decided not to attempt to patch this section, and the listener will hear a small jump toward the end of the first movement as a result.

**The 29th Symphony** carries with it the hallmark acoustic of NBC's somewhat notorious Studio 8H, which I do not find as sympathetic to the orchestra as that of Carnegie Hall, even when filtered through the kind of damaged discs heard here in the Piano Concerto. However, it is an excellent example of Toscanini's Mozart, where the use of a slimmed-down orchestra was very much ahead of its time. As Mortimer Frank notes: *"...the performance is, for its time at least, a revelation. One has only to compare it to other commercial recordings of the work then available - one made by Serge Koussevitzky, the other by Beecham - to recognize how Toscanini's approach, in its lightness, transparency, and unaffected simplicity, comes far closer to modern scholarship's view of Mozart than the waywardly heavy-handed style of Beecham or the livelier but thicker-textured reading of Koussevitzky..."* (Arturo Toscanini - The NBC Years, Amadeus Press, 2002)

NOTES BY ANDREW ROSE - FULL NOTES ON THIS RECORDING CAN BE FOUND AT [WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM](http://WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM)