



BEETHOVEN

VIOLIN CONCERTO, SYMPHONY NO. 5



Ludwig van Beethoven's **Violin Concerto in D major**, Op. 61, was written in 1806. The work was premiered on December 23, 1806 in the Theater an der Wien in Vienna. Beethoven wrote the concerto for his colleague Franz Clement, a leading violinist of the day, who had earlier given him helpful advice on his opera *Fidelio*. The occasion was a benefit concert for Clement. However, the first printed edition (1808) was dedicated to Beethoven's friend Stephan von Breuning. It is believed that Beethoven finished the solo part so late that Clement had to sight-read part of his performance. Perhaps to express his annoyance, or to show what he could do when he had time to prepare, Clement is said to have interrupted the concerto between the first and second movements with a solo composition of his own, played on one string of the violin held upside down; however, other sources claim that he did play such a piece but only at the end of the program. The premiere was not a success, and the concerto was little performed in the following decades. The work was revived in 1844, well after Beethoven's death, with performances by the then 12-year-old violinist Joseph Joachim with the orchestra conducted by Felix Mendelssohn. Ever since, it has been one of the most important works of the violin concerto repertoire, and it is frequently performed and recorded today.

The **Symphony No. 5 in C minor**, Op. 67, was written by Beethoven in 1804–08. This symphony is one of the most popular and best-known compositions in all of classical music, and one of the most often played symphonies. It comprises four movements: an opening sonata, an andante, and a fast scherzo which leads attacca to the finale. First performed in Vienna's Theater an der Wien in 1808, the work achieved its prodigious reputation soon afterwards. E. T. A. Hoffmann described the symphony as "one of the most important works of the time". The Fifth Symphony had a long gestation. The first sketches date from 1804 following the completion of the Third Symphony. However, Beethoven repeatedly interrupted his work on the Fifth to prepare other compositions, including the first version of *Fidelio*, the *Appassionata* piano sonata, the three Razumovsky string quartets, the Violin Concerto, the Fourth Piano Concerto, the Fourth Symphony, and the Mass in C. The final preparation of the Fifth Symphony, which took place in 1807–1808, was carried out in parallel with the Sixth Symphony, which premiered at the same concert.

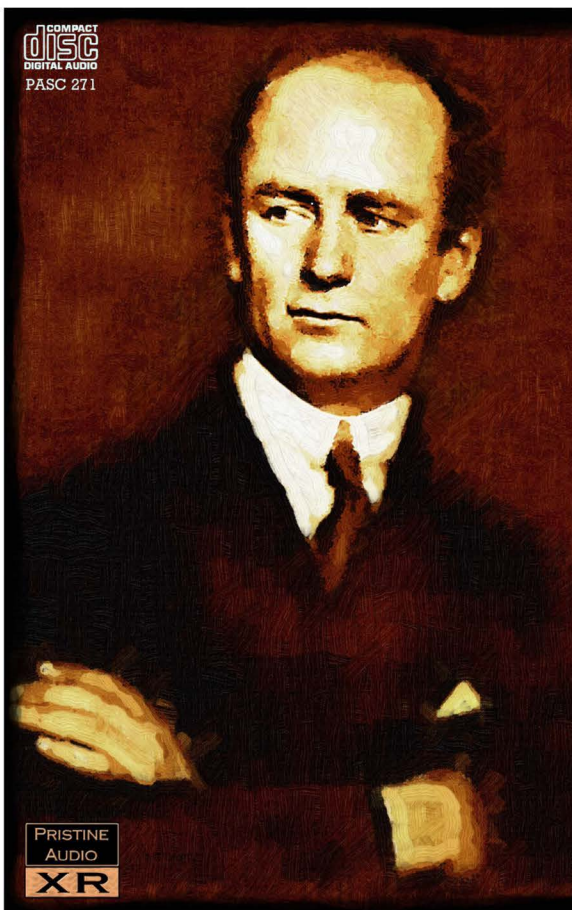
These notes from Wikipedia.org. Full scores are available at The International Music Score Library Project: <http://imslp.org>

Recording and restoration notes

These two recordings offer two very different perspectives on technical developments in wartime Germany, as well as the long-term preservation of historic recordings. The *Violin Concerto* was recorded during Furtwängler's last ever concert at the Alte Philharmonie in Berlin, just 17 days before the hall was destroyed by an Allied bombing raid. Even prior to the present remastering, it was clear that technically the recording was good, and a quick online search for Erich Röhn, the soloist, reveals a number of people claiming this as their favourite interpretation. I was delighted to discover, therefore, that the recording as previously heard was to a great extent hiding its light under a bushel, so to speak - there was far more in terms of sonic potential in the recording than might ever have been suspected, and it really does show just how much could be captured on the still very early magnetic tape medium. Naturally it's not perfect, and I've had to work hard to retain natural high frequencies whilst battling hissy distortion during louder passages. That said, one could easily be fooled into believing this to be a live broadcast from the 1960s. This is not something that could ever be claimed for the companion on this release, the *Symphony No. 5*, which shows all signs of having spent at least some point of its life on very frequency-limited discs. There's little or no top end to be extracted, and evidence of swish which simply shouldn't be expected on an allegedly taped recording. What is deeply puzzling is that a recording of the Fourth Symphony from this same concert (PASC267) offers superb fidelity, almost on a par with that of the Violin Concerto here. I've done what I can to even out the frequency response and make the best of the *Fifth*, but one should be prepared to 'retune' ones ears after listening to the concerto. **AR**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM

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BEETHOVEN

VIOLIN CONCERTO

IN D MAJOR

Op. 61

ERICH RÖHN, VIOLIN

SYMPHONY NO. 5

IN C MINOR

Op. 67

WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER

CONDUCTING THE
BERLIN PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA

RECORDED IN 1943 & 1944

Furtwängler's Wartime Beethoven

BEETHOVEN Violin Concerto in D major, OP. 61

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro ma non troppo (24:12)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Larghetto (10:53)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Rondo - Allegro (9:07)

Erich Röhn, violin

Recorded at Alte Philharmonie, Berlin, 12th January, 1944

BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 5 in C minor, OP. 67

- 4 1st mvt. - Allegro con brio (8:15)
- 5 2nd mvt. - Andante con moto (11:05)
- 6 3rd mvt. - Scherzo - Allegro (5:59)
- 7 4th mvt. - Allegro (8:09)

Recorded at Alte Philharmonie, Berlin, 30th June, 1943

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra

conducted by **Wilhelm Furtwängler**



PASC 271

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a photograph
of **Wilhelm Furtwängler**

Total duration: **77:41**

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