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Wilhelm Backhaus

Beethoven Piano Concertos 2 and 3

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Backhaus gives it a performance that is markedly more sensitive than some of those he has lately accorded the solo sonatas. ... Throughout everything is clear and in place; a fine performance matched by a recording that manages to be first-class in spite of—or perhaps because of—the absence of any endeavour to be sensational. That quality, indeed, would not be in place; and sobriety of the order that is unvaryingly maintained throughout this disc is not at all to be despised. The millennium will occur when this standard is the normal minimum to be expected of all records offered for public sale.

M.M. The Gramophone, February 1953 (Reviewing LX 3083, *Piano Concerto No. 2*, excerpt)

Backhaus's performance has his usual brittleness and precision. He is here the classic-minded performer, more interested in form and pattern than in the personal expression of Beethoven the man; and his treatment suits this work better than it would, perhaps, the G major. The orchestral playing is discreet rather than forceful; there is, to one part of ears, a slight over-prominence of the piano, just as there is a slight excess in the use of the damper pedal. The recording as such is not wholly satisfactory, for it suffers from that odd quality to which long-players seem to be liable—unevenness. The piano jangles somewhat on its first entrance, then the tone warms up, then there is some more jangling, and then, in the cadenza, the piano tone comes properly into focus (though even here it is a little hard). On the first side the bass is light..

H.F. The Gramophone, February 1951 (Reviewing LXT2553, *Piano Concerto No. 3*, excerpt)

Transfer notes

Both of these recordings, whilst fundamentally sound, have benefited enormously from a thorough restoration and XR remastering - given the recording dates, right at the beginning of the adoption of tape mastering and LP distribution, the myriad of now-correctable faults was entirely unsurprising. Pitch generally fluctuated between about A=335Hz and A=440Hz, and these variations have been evened out to concert pitch - but the coda of Concerto No. 2 came in at A=432Hz - a significant drop suggesting a section edited in from a very different recording. The total difficulties suggested in contemporary reviews sound even more pronounced today, I would suggest, given our far improved listening equipment over a reviewer of the early 1950s.

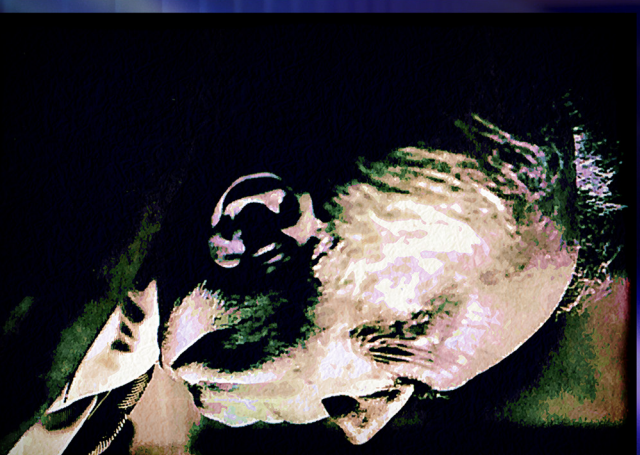
Fortunately we now also have the technology and expertise to address these shortcomings. I've also been able to make significant inroads on tape hiss and an assortment of extraneous noises and irritants. The results here have proved particularly satisfying - a full, clear, clean sound has been discovered both for piano and orchestra to an extent that demands a critical reassessment of both of these recordings. My sense is that, as has happened regularly before, the listener will now find significantly more to enjoy here than in any previous release. **A.R.**

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

Beethoven Edition



Volume 10

Piano Concerto No. 2

Piano Concerto No. 3

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
Clemens Krauss • Karl Böhm
Wilhelm Backhaus, piano

Decca Studio Recordings
1952 & 1950

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

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

Piano Concerto No. 2

Recorded 25-26 May 1952
First issued as Decca LX 3084

Piano Concerto No. 3

Recorded 23 September 1950
First issued as Decca LXT 2553

Producer **Victor Olof**

Engineer **Cyril Windebank**

Recorded at **Grosser Saal,
Musikverein, Vienna**

Total duration: **61:45**

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Backhaus Beethoven Edition Volume 10

BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 2 in B flat major, Op. 19

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro con brio (13:51)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Adagio (6:58)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Rondo (Molto allegro) (6:31)

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra Karl Böhm

BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37

- 4 1st mvt. - Allegro con brio (16:34)
- 5 2nd mvt. - Largo (8:41)
- 6 3rd mvt. - Rondo (Allegro) (9:10)

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra Clemens Krauss

Wilhelm Backhaus piano