

ALFRED CORTOT

Concertos, Volume Two

Pristine
XR

Bach, Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 - Historic 78rpm Review

The Brandenburg, with its soloists, is as napable as strawberries and cream. These players, a-tiptoe in elegance and phrase-pointing, are a happy team. The long cadenza for the pianist is reticently done. The tone records rather less fully than in many discs. There is no showiness anywhere. That allows us to enjoy the shaping of the music—Bach's and theirs. The second movement (side 3), for the trio alone, is an everlasting retreat of beauty; and the finale sets—perhaps not the feet, but the heart dancing.

WRA, The Gramophone, July 1933

Bach, Organ Concerto No. 5 - Recent CD Reissue Review

Everything here is delectable but the very disc itself would object if I did not single out the pianist's arrangement of the *Largo* from Bach's F minor Concerto, something for everyone's desert island and enough to bring tears to the eyes of even the most puritan listener.

Bryce Morrison, Gramophone, December 2010

Bach, Brandenburg Concertos - Recent CD Reissue Review

These are astonishing performances and are well worth a detailed listen, particularly for those who find, as I do, that Cortot was one of the most fascinating musical figures of the twentieth century. First, for sheer lightness and speed, many of Cortot's readings are unique for their time (the Busch set is often heavy and literal in comparison). The pointed articulation and directness of speech imparted by Cortot and matched by his players approaches that of many later "period instrument" ensembles. And when Cortot takes the odd liberty with the score (use of pizzicato in the bass part, for example), it is always to clarify the voice leading and render the music more articulate (Gustav Leonhardt, in his distinguished 1977 recording of these works, made over forty years later, achieved the same effect through use of "period" instruments and the fine articulation which they demand). Cortot's are performances of amazing energy and directness, often astonishingly modern in their outlook, and timeless in their musicianship. Many features of Cortot's insightful musical approach were not explored further until the 1960's, with the advent of the "historical performance" movement. Cortot was, truly, a musician far ahead of his time.

Dr. Peter G. Watchorn, harpsichordist, Amazon, 2003 (excerpt)

Producer's Note

These recordings demonstrate three sides of Cortot's musicianship: his second (of three!) outing as soloist in the Schumann *Concerto*, a fine 1927 recording; his conducting of the six *Brandenburg* Concertos, which include an outing as piano soloist in the fifth (it is unclear whether he plays harpsichord in the other concertos), recordings of considerably variable sound quality; and his own arrangement for piano of Bach's *Organ Concerto No. 5*, itself a re-working of a concerto by Vivaldi for two violins and cello, well-recorded in 1937.

Each recording presented a variety of technical challenges, and some noisy sides in the Brandenburgs proved exceptionally troublesome. Capstan pitch stabilisation has been deployed throughout, to considerable effect in solidifying the sound, whilst XR remastering has done much to improve the tonal balance of each recording.

Andrew Rose

Cortot

CONCERTOS Volume Two

SCHUMANN

Piano Concerto

BACH

Brandenburg Concertos

BACH (arr. Cortot)

Organ Concerto No. 5

PASC 447

Studio recordings, 1927 - 1937

Pristine
XR

CORTOT *Concertos, Volume Two*

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO
PASC 447

CD 1 **SCHUMANN Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54**

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro affettuoso (14:57)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Intermezzo (4:53)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Allegro vivace (10:19)

J. S. BACH Brandenburg Concertos, BWV 1046-1051

- 4 **Concerto No. 1 in F** - 1st mvt. - [Allegro] (4:31)
- 5 2nd mvt. - Adagio (4:32)
- 6 3rd mvt. - Allegro (4:17)
- 7 4th mvt. - Menuetto (4:53)
- 8 **Concerto No. 2 in F** - 1st mvt. - [Allegro] (5:37)
- 9 2nd mvt. - Andante (4:08)
- 10 3rd mvt. - Allegro assai (3:14)

CD 2 1 **Concerto No. 3 in G** - 1st mvt. - [Allegro moderato] (8:09)

- 2 2nd mvt. - Adagio (0:18)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Allegro (3:24)
- 4 **Concerto No. 4 in G** - 1st mvt. - Allegro (6:42)
- 5 2nd mvt. - Andante (4:06)
- 6 3rd mvt. - Presto (4:57)
- 7 **Concerto No. 5 in D** - 1st mvt. - Allegro (9:31)
- 8 2nd mvt. - Affettuoso (4:35)
- 9 3rd mvt. - Allegro (5:00)
- 10 **Concerto No. 6 in B flat** - 1st mvt. - [Allegro moderato] (6:54)
- 11 2nd mvt. - Adagio ma non tanto (4:56)
- 12 3rd mvt. - Allegro (5:33)

J. S. BACH (arr. Cortot) Organ Concerto No. 5, BWV 596

- 13 1st mvt. - Prelude (2:52)
- 14 2nd mvt. - Sicilienne (2:59)
- 15 3rd mvt. - Toccata (4:07)

SCHUMANN PIANO CONCERTO

Alfred Cortot, piano

London Symphony Orchestra, conductor: **Landon Ronald**

Recorded: Queen's Hall, London, 22 June 1927

Issued as HMV DB.1059-62, Matrix Nos. CR 1398-1405

BACH BRANDENBURG CONCERTOS

Alfred Cortot, conductor, piano (concerto No. 5)

Gabriel Bouillon, violin (concerto No. 4)

Roger Cortet, flute (concertos Nos. 4, 5)

Jacques Thibaud, violin (concerto No. 5)

Orchestre de l'Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris

Recorded: Salle de l'Ecole Normale, Paris

Concerto No. 1: 1 June, 1933, HMV DB.2033-34, 2PG.806-809

Concerto No. 2: 30 May, 1933, HMV DB.2035-36, 2PG.801-803

Concerto No. 3: 2 December, 1931, HMV DB.1259-60, 0W.1024-27

Concerto No. 4: 29 May, 1933, HMV DB.2037-38, 2PG.797-800

Concerto No. 5: 16-17 May, 1932, HMV DB.1783-84, 2L.411-414

Concerto No. 6: 4 December, 1931, HMV DB.1626-27, 2W.1033-36

BACH ORGAN CONCERTO

Alfred Cortot, piano

Recorded: Abbey Road Studio 3, 18 May 1937

Issued as HMV DB.3261-2, Matrix Nos. 2EA. 4930-32

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Alfred Cortot

Total duration: 2hr 0:27

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