

"With Furtwängler, I note with great pleasure that the worse our situation becomes, the more closely he aligns himself with our regime, much in contrast to Richard Strauss, who previously couldn't do enough to show his devotion, yet today speaks a language that is almost enough to land him in court"
– Joseph Goebbels, *diary entry*, 13 January 1944

"Furtwängler is a very idiosyncratic and stubborn figure. He is happy to make use of the National Socialist state's resources when they serve his purpose." – Joseph Goebbels, *diary entry*, 16 December 1942

[Quotes taken from an article suggesting confusion within the Nazi regime about Furtwängler's real political stance towards them.]

The narratives of Richard Strauss and Wilhelm Furtwängler during the Nazi regime in Germany are complex and often misunderstood. While both appeared to serve the Third Reich, their actions reveal a deeper, more nuanced story. Notably, Strauss warned pianist Jascha Spivakovsky in 1933 to flee the regime. Similarly, Furtwängler's early defiance of Hitler is evident in their 1933 meeting, where Furtwängler vehemently opposed the Führer's antisemitic policies in music, resulting in a heated argument. The following year, Furtwängler publicly denounced Hitler as an "enemy of the human race," marking the start of ongoing conflicts with a regime that persistently tried to control him.

Despite these tensions, Furtwängler's talents were recognized and rewarded. Even as the Gestapo built a case against him and some regime members believed he deserved severe punishment, he continued to receive substantial compensation. By the middle of the war, Furtwängler was earning the modern equivalent of over €60,000 for each series of three (later four) concerts with the Berlin orchestra, reflecting his exceptional stature and resilience in the face of oppressive forces.

These broadcast concerts took place between January 1939 and January 1945, with each being recorded by order of Goebbels. Whilst the earliest surviving recordings were cut directly to disc, by the time of the performances presented here, the favoured recording medium was magnetic tape – still very much in its infancy but already in many ways superior to any other preservation method. A number of those tapes disappeared for many years into the Soviet Union at the end of the war, only to emerge decades later, and some remain missing today.

What has survived offers a vivid sonic picture of the Berlin Philharmonic under Furtwängler during those war years, and these recordings have responded brilliantly to Pristine's Ambient Stereo XR remastering processing, with the *Symphonia Domestica*, from one of the last four concerts to take place before the destruction of the Alte Philharmonie concert hall in an Allied bombing raid at the end of January 1944, sounding especially vibrant.

"...I personally loved the Philharmonie, which not only has been the site of all my adult professional activities but also is linked to many indelible memories. At this moment I find it nearly inconceivable that we will shall again have a hall to call our own that is so well suited to our artistic requirements..."
– Wilhelm Furtwängler, *from a letter to the fellowship of the Berliner Philharmonic*, 9 February 1944

Andrew Rose



PRISTINE
AUDIO

PASC 718

R. STRAUSS DON JUAN, TILL EULENSPIEGEL, SYMPHONIA DOMESTICA
FURTWÄNGLER, BERLIN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

furtwängler

conducts r. strauss

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1. R. STRAUSS Don Juan, Op. 20 (17:25)

Concerts of 15, 16, 17 February, 1942

2. R. STRAUSS Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche (Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks), Op. 28 (15:05)

Concerts of 13, 14, 15, 16 November, 1943

R. STRAUSS Symphonia Domestica, Op. 53

3. Bewegt - Thema I - Thema II - Thema III (5:16)

4. Scherzo (Munter) (6:09)

5. Wiegenlied - Maessig langsam (5:31)

6. Adagio - (Langsam) (12:31)

7. Finale (Sehr lebhaft) (13:08)

Concerts of 9, 10, 11, 12 January, 1944

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler

XR remastered in Ambient Stereo by Andrew Rose

Recorded at Alte Philharmonie, Berlin

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Furtwängler and Strauss

Total duration: 75:06

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