

Artur Schnabel

BEETHOVEN Diabelli Variations



"We present here to the world Variations of no ordinary type, but a great and important masterpiece . . . such a work as only Beethoven, the greatest living representative of true art . . . can produce. The most original structures and ideas, the boldest musical adorns and harmonies are here exhausted, every pianoforte effect based on a solid technique is employed, and this work is the more interesting from the fact that it is elicited from a theme which no-one would otherwise have supposed capable of a working-out of that character in which our exalted Master stands alone among his contemporaries. The splendid Fugues, Nos. 24 and 32, will astonish all friends and connoisseurs of serious style, as will Nos. 6, 16, 17, 23, etc., the brilliant pianists; indeed all these variations, through the novelty of their ideas, care in working-out, and beauty in the most artful of their transitions, will entitle the work to a place beside Sebastian Bach's famous masterpiece in the same form. We are proud to have given occasion for this composition . . ."

Anton Diabelli - *original publisher's notes*

Transfer notes

This transfer was made not from the original 78s, but from later vinyl transfers made by EMI, which proved generally to offer much quieter sides but, by virtue of predating the digital era, little or no heavy-handed sonic intervention in their production. The results for the most part speak for themselves, with the majority of sides being clean and clear and largely devoid of the surface noise typical of the original HMV shellac discs.

However this restoration would not have been possible - at least not to this degree of success - prior to 2011. For despite EMI's best efforts, their vinyl transfers were dogged throughout with an astonishing degree of wow and flutter, leaving Schnabel's Beethoven sounding distinctly wobbly and inviting a certain sense of sea-sickness to the more pitch-sensitive listener.

New technology, its use pioneered by Pristine Audio in our Beethoven Sonatas series from Schnabel, has finally allowed us to overcome this problem, and deliver Schnabel's Beethoven in a rock-solid temperament never heard before. It has also responded astonishingly well to 32-bit XR remastering here, as can be heard from the opening bars of the theme that begins Beethoven's magnum opus for piano.

Despite a couple of sides displaying more than average surface noise, the overall quality I've been able to achieve is quite astounding, something that I've been able to carry on into the Rondos and Minuet which complete this release. Keeping a light touch on the use of noise reduction has further allowed Schnabel's piano to sing clearly and cleanly, with a fullness of tone and upper frequency extension which has been lacking from previous issues. **AR**

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

Diabelli Variations, Op. 120

Three Rondos

Minuet in E flat



Artur Schnabel, piano

Studio recordings, 1933 - 1938

BEETHOVEN Diabelli Variations Op120

1. **Theme - Vivace** (0:52)
2. **1. Alla marcia, maestoso** (1:41)
3. **2. Poco allegro, leggierezze** (1:13)
4. **3. L'istesso tempo, dolce** (1:17)
5. **4. Un poco più vivace** (1:03)
6. **5. Allegro vivace** (0:54)
7. **6. Allegro ma non troppo e serio** (1:37)
8. **7. Un poco più allegro** (0:58)
9. **8. Poco vivace** (1:29)
10. **9. Allegro pesante e risoluto** (2:06)
11. **10. Presto** (0:41)
12. **11. Allegretto** (1:09)
13. **12. Un poco più mosso** (0:51)
14. **13. Vivace** (0:55)
15. **14. Grave e maestoso** (3:50)
16. **15. Presto scherzando** (0:37)
17. **16. Allegro** (0:51)
18. **17. Allegro** (0:54)
19. **18. Poco moderato** (1:36)
20. **19. Presto** (0:50)
21. **20. Andante** (3:31)
22. **21. Allegro con brio - meno allegro** (1:01)
23. **22. Allegro molto** (0:31)
24. **23. Allegro assai** (0:54)
25. **24. Andante** (3:06)
26. **25. Allegro leggierezze** (0:47)

27. **26. (Piacevole)** (1:02)
28. **27. Vivace** (0:56)
29. **28. Allegro** (0:56)
30. **29. Adagio na non troppo** (1:21)
31. **30. Andante, sempre cantabile** (2:01)
32. **31. Largo, molto espressivo, sotto voce** (5:29)
33. **32. Allegro** (2:50)
34. **33. Tempo di Menuetto, moderato** (4:02)
35. **Rondo in A, WoO 49** (3:28)
36. **Rondo in C, Op. 51, No. 1** (4:56)
37. **Rondo a capriccio in G major, Op. 129**
"Rage over a lost penny" (5:00)
38. **Minuet in E flat, WoO 82** (3:43)

Tracks 1-34 recorded 30 October and 2 November, 1937, issued as HMV DB 3519-25. Matrix Nos 2EA 5540-53

Track 35 recorded 14 January, 1937, issued as HMV DB 3629. Matrix No. 2EA 4542

Track 36 recorded 13 April, 1933, issued as HMV DB 1944. Matrix No. 2B 6630

Track 37 recorded 13 January, 1937, issued as HMV DB 3629, Matrix No. 2EA 4529

Track 38 recorded 10 November, 1938, issued as HMV DB 3786, Matrix No. 2EA 7023

Recorded at Abbey Road Studio 3, London
Producer: Fred Gaisberg Engineer: Edward Fowler

Artur Schnabel **piano**



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Andrew Rose

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on photographs of
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