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PABLO CASALS

PRISTINE
AUDIO
XR

BRAHMS DOUBLE CONCERTO • DVORAK CELLO CONCERTO BOCCHERINI CELLO SONATA No. 6

BRAHMS Concerto for Violin, Cello & Orchestra in A minor, Op. 102

- 1 1st mvt. - *Allegro* (15:27)
- 2 2nd mvt. - *Andante* (7:00)
- 3 3rd mvt. - *Vivace non troppo* (8:58)

Jacques Thibaud, violin - Pablo Casals Orchestra, conducted by Alfred Cortot
Recorded in Barcelona, 10-11 May, 1929. First issued as HMV DB1311014, matrices CJ2156-63

BOCCHERINI Cello Sonata No. 4 in A, G4

- 4 1st mvt. - *Adagio* (3:36)
- 5 2nd mvt. - *Allegro* (4:23)

Blas Net, piano
Recorded in Barcelona, 16-17 June, 1929. First issued as HMV DB1392, matrices CJ2275-6

DVORAK Cello Concerto in B minor, B191

- 6 1st mvt. - *Allegro* (13:34)
- 7 2nd mvt. - *Adagio, ma non troppo* (10:33)
- 8 3rd mvt. - *Allegro moderato* (11:56)

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by George Szell
Recorded in Prague, 28 April, 1937. First issued as HMV DB3288-92, matrices 2HC220-9

Pablo Casals, cello

Transfer and XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, September 2010

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Pablo Casals

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PABLO CASALS

BRAHMS
DOUBLE CONCERTO

DVORÁK
CELLO CONCERTO

BOCCHERINI
CELLO SONATA No. 4

JACQUES THIBAUD, VIOLIN
PABLO CASALS ORCH., CORTOT

CZECH PHILHARMONIC, SZELL

BLAS NET, PIANO

RECORDED 1929 AND 1937

PABLO CASALS

BRAHMS DOUBLE CONCERTO • DVORAK CELLO CONCERTO

BOCCHERINI CELLO SONATA NO. 6

The major concerto recordings of Pablo Casals, in particular that of the Dvorák *Cello Concerto* of 1937, have been staples of the classical catalogue ever since their original releases. At the time of writing there are several issues available in different transfers by different labels, and it is surely fair, therefore, to ask why the world needs yet another transfer.

The truth of the matter is that this release came out of an instance of pure curiosity on my part. I had received, in amongst a major collection of LP records, a vinyl transcription of the Dvorák on a white-label test pressing that appeared to have been barely, if ever, played. I confess I have no idea whether this transfer was released, and if so, when - it was simply to serve as a quick and easy means of subjecting the recording to an XR remastering test - I certainly was not expecting the results of this to merit issue.

However, the LP transfer turned out to be much better than I had expected, and the XR remastering brought such new life to it that I decided to persevere with it, needing only to drop in a couple of short sections from alternative sources where top-end quality was less than excellent. Sitting close by was another test pressing, this time the Boccherini Cello Concerto No 9 with Casals conducting and Maurice Gendron playing. Investigations suggested that this was the first time Boccherini's original - rather than Grützmacher's bastardised version - had been recorded, and that it dated from 1958 but appeared since to have disappeared from the catalogue. I quickly got to work on this stereo recording with the intention of partnering it with the Dvorák, only to discover at the last minute that the erudite and well-respected author of the notes from which I'd taken the recording date was out by a matter of two years, and that the recording itself would remain in copyright until 2012.

Turning - in need of some other recording to add to this release - to the Pristine Audio collection of 78s, I dug out the older recording of Brahms's *Double Concerto*. As it dates from 1929 my hopes were less high than for the Dvorák, but despite some noisier sides I was extremely impressed with how these came out. The XR process not only opened out upper frequencies and harmonics beyond those normally heard, it also unleashed an unusually rich acoustic from the recording venue which had been somewhat squashed before.

The *Double Concerto* recording contains clues as to why the XR process can be so successful in reviving older cello recordings - whereas the cello's harmonics are generally quite well represented in the limited frequency range of 1929 recording equipment, there are points where Thibaud's highest harmonics have a tendency to distort and thus produce a less pleasant sound. That said, it's still a remarkably clear and balanced recording for its day, and now far clearer and cleaner than ever before.

Finally, as a result of recent diligent cataloguing work of the darker recesses of our collection by our archivist, I discovered the Boccherini disc tucked away in a large album of mixed 78s and in very good condition. As it was recorded in Barcelona shortly after the Brahms I decided to add it to the concerto recordings as a kind of musical stepping stone between the larger works. Again the remastering process brought out much clarity, warmth and a lovely reverberant acoustic to complement the instruments.

NOTES BY ANDREW ROSE - FURTHER NOTES ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM