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PASC 259

BRUCKNER SYMPHONY No. 7 IN E MAJOR

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Bruckner's Symphony No. 7 in E major (WAB 107) is one of his best-known symphonies. It was written between 1881 and 1883 and was revised in 1885. It is dedicated to Ludwig II of Bavaria. The premiere, given under Arthur Nikisch in the opera house at Leipzig in 1884, brought Bruckner the greatest success he had known in his life. The symphony is sometimes referred to as the "Lyric", though the appellation is not the composer's own, and is seldom used.

The first commercial recording was made by Oskar Fried with the Berlin State Opera Orchestra in 1924 for Polydor. Along with the Fourth, the Seventh is the most popular Bruckner symphony both in the concert hall and on record.

According to Frederic Spotts's *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, Adolf Hitler compared this symphony favorably with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. When he consecrated a bust of Bruckner at Regensburg's Walhalla temple in 1937, the Adagio from the Seventh was played as Hitler stood in quiet admiration. A recording of the Adagio was played before the official radio announcement of the German defeat at Stalingrad on 31 January 1943 and before Admiral Karl Dönitz announced Hitler's death on Radio Berlin on 1 May 1945; a recording by Furtwängler was used [the 1942 Adagio recording found on PASC257].

These notes and more: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._7_\(Bruckner\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._7_(Bruckner))

Full scores for this work are available for free download at The International Music Score Library Project: <http://imslp.org>

Recording and restoration notes

When it became known that I was working on a series of recordings of Furtwängler conducting Bruckner's symphonies, there was a certain degree of lobbying by e-mail for which recording might be chosen. I had already made considerable progress on the 1951 Cairo recording when I noticed repeated mentions both in e-mails and elsewhere referring to his 1949 Berlin recording as *the* one. Though not unanimous, it certainly made it worth investigating.

This is the earliest complete recording we have of Bruckner's Symphony No. 7 by Furtwängler. There is a fragmentary 1941 live recording, and the 1942 Telefunken studio recording of the Adagio (available on PASC257); thereafter two radio recordings from 1951, the first in Cairo, the second Rome, all with the Berlin Philharmonic, have seen numerous reissues.

But it is this recording and performance which is, for many, the best of them. Certainly from a technical point of view it's remarkably good. Despite a somewhat cramped and occasionally overly strident original sound, a product of uneven frequency responses in the recording equipment, all the ingredients were present for a really quite wonderful XR remastering - with deep, clear bass and brilliant top end detail preserved if previously obscured by a "woolly" sound at both ends of the spectrum.

That's not to say it was without fault. I've removed some quite intrusive traffic noise, and dealt with top end 'flutter' - where the signal levels fluctuate rapidly in the higher frequencies. This latter problem was particularly heard during the second movement, and it has been possible to eliminate almost all of it, though there is a section where it may still just be detected.

Overall, though, the sound is crisp, clear, immediate and vibrant - and as such delivers almost as well as the great conductor himself.

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

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BRUCKNER SYMPHONY No 7 IN E

WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER

CONDUCTING THE
BERLIN PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA

LIVE RECORDING
BERLIN, 1949

Furtwängler conducts Bruckner

BRUCKNER Symphony No. 7 in E major, WAB107

1885 Version with some modifications by Bruckner [ed. Albert Gutmann]

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro moderato (19:15)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Adagio. Sehr feierlich und sehr langsam (20:46)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Scherzo. Sehr schnell (9:38)
- 4 4th mvt. - Finale. Bewegt, doch nicht schnell (11:47)

Recorded live at Gemeindehaus, Berlin-Dahlem, 18 October, 1949

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
conducted by **Wilhelm Furtwängler**



XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of **Willem Furtwängler**

Total duration: **61:26**

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