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# NOEL MEWTON-WOOD

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**Noel Mewton-Wood** (20 November 1922 – 5 December 1953) was an Australian-born concert pianist who achieved some fame during his short life. Born in Melbourne, he studied with Waldemar Seidel at the Melbourne Conservatorium until the age of fourteen. After further studies at London's Royal Academy of Music, Mewton-Wood spent time with Artur Schnabel in Italy.

In March 1940, he returned to London for his debut performance at Queen's Hall, performing Beethoven's third piano concerto with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Thomas Beecham. He later performed in France, Germany, South Africa, Poland, Turkey and Australia.

Mewton-Wood's The Times obituary of 7 December 1953 described his debut performance: "At once his remarkable control and his musicianship were apparent: the ascending scales in octaves, with which the pianist first enters, thundered out with whirlwind power, but he could summon beautiful cantabile tone for the slow movement and the phrasing of the rondo theme was admirably neat for all the rapidity of the tempo; a true understanding of the relationship in concerto between soloist and orchestra, and of the soloist's part in ensemble, betokened the musician, the potential chamber performer."

Mewton-Wood was a close friend of Benjamin Britten. In 1952-53, while Britten was occupied in the writing of his opera Gloriana, Mewton-Wood deputised as the accompanist for Britten's partner Peter Pears.

At the age of thirty-one, Mewton-Wood committed suicide by drinking prussic acid (hydrogen cyanide), apparently blaming himself for the death of a friend. The notes written by a friend of Mewton-Wood, John Amis, for the rerelease of the Bliss Concerto recording, indicate that Mewton-Wood was gay and was depressed by the recent death of his lover.

Benjamin Britten wrote Canticum III: Still falls the rain for Mewton-Wood's memorial concert.

*Notes from Wikipedia*

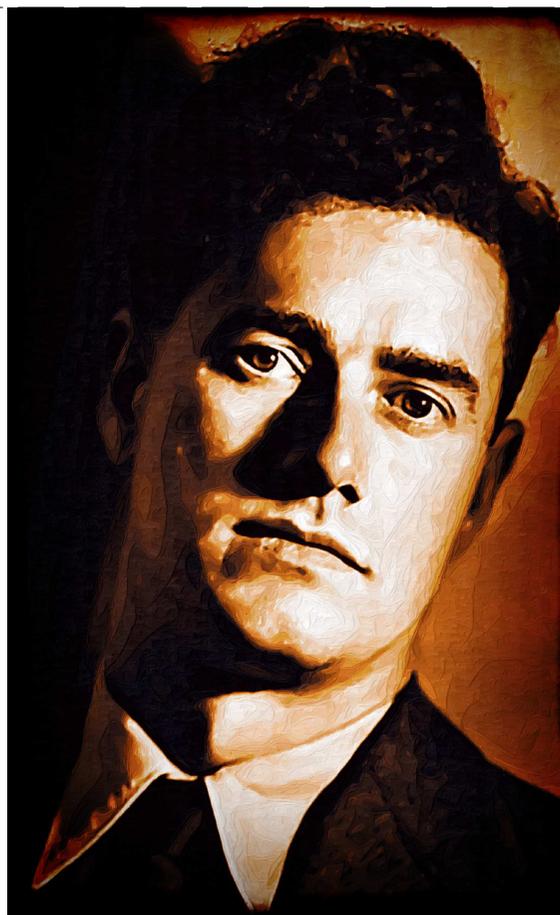
#### Restoration notes

Although we are lucky to have a handful of recordings which demonstrate the wonderful pianism of Noel Mewton-Wood, it is perhaps to be regretted that these are largely drawn from the LPs made by the Musical Masterpiece Society and its various offshoots. Often, particularly in the early days, rather poorly recorded, the company also kept costs down by simplifying cover designs and information (or lack of it) as well as cheaply pressing lightweight ten inch vinyl discs.

The fact that these two recordings also span the often 'difficult' years as new tape technology replaced established 78rpm disc-to-disc recording methods has created extra work for the modern restorer. Both recordings are lacking in the extreme top end, and the orchestral tone at the beginning of the Chopin leaves a great deal to be desired. Happily this is to a degree rectified as the work progresses, and would have been passable for 78rpm release. Both recordings suffer from a light amount of peak distortion, but this has generally been rendered as unobtrusive as possible. What does shine in both of these recordings is the superb piano playing and generally fine piano tone of Mewton-Wood, for which we can be most grateful! **AR**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT [WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM](http://WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM)

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# MEWTON WOOD

STRAVINSKY  
CONCERTO FOR PIANO  
AND WINDS

CHOPIN  
PIANO CONCERTO No. 2

NETHERLANDS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA  
ZURICH RADIO ORCHESTRA  
CONDUCTED BY

WALTER GOEHR

RECORDED IN 1952 AND 1948

PRISTINE  
AUDIO  
XR

## Mewton-Wood plays Stravinsky & Chopin

### STRAVINSKY Concerto for Piano & Wind Instruments

- 1 1st mvt. - Largo - Allegro (7:41)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Larghissimo (7:25)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Allegro (5:20)

#### Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra

conducted by Walter Goehr

### CHOPIN Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor OP.21

- 1 1st mvt. - Maestoso (13:40)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Larghetto (8:58)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Allegro vivace (8:19)

#### Zurich Radio Orchestra

conducted by Walter Goehr

Noel Mewton-Wood piano



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XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a photograph of **Noel Mewton-Wood**

#### Stravinsky

Recorded 1952  
Transfer from Club National du Disque 10" LP MMS 64

#### Chopin

Recorded 1948  
Transfer from Guild International du Disque 10" LP MMS 4

Total duration: **51:23**

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