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## Hidemaro Konoye

### Complete Berlin Philharmonic Recordings

**Viscount Hidemaro Konoye** (18 November 1898—2 June 1973) was a conductor and composer of classical music in Shōwa period Japan. He was the brother of pre-war Japanese Prime Minister Prince Fumimaro Konoye.

Konoye attended the Gakushuin Peers School, where he became a close friend of Takashi Inukai. In 1913, he entered the Tokyo University of the Arts, where he specialized in the violin. In 1915, he went to study briefly in Germany to study musical composition, and became a pupil of Kosaku Yamada on his return to Japan. His debut as a conductor was in 1920, with an amateur orchestra led by Toukichi Setoguchi. Konoye returned to Europe for further studies in 1923 in Paris under Vincent d'Indy and Berlin under Franz Schreker. He also studied conducting under Erich Kleiber, and Karl Muck. In 1924, he conducted at the Berlin Philharmonic, and returned to Japan in the fall of the same year. Konoye co-founded the Japan Symphonic Association in 1925, and the following year became conductor of the orchestra. Konoe later founded the New Symphony Orchestra of Tokyo (the present day NHK Symphony Orchestra), and helped mold the orchestra over a 10 year period into an ensemble that was praised as competitive with many of the better orchestras in Europe.

Konoye made numerous guest appearances in Europe and America, conducting some 90 different orchestras in the course of his career including the orchestra of La Scala, Milan and the NBC Symphony Orchestra. He created friendships with Erich Kleiber, Leopold Stokowski, Wilhelm Furtwängler and Richard Strauss. He went to Germany and conducted Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in the second half of the 1930s. Konoye wrote original compositions, but was more deeply interested in arranging existing music, including, for example, Modest Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition and Schubert's C major Quintet, which he orchestrated.

*Notes from Wikipedia*

#### Recording and restoration notes

Konoye's earliest recordings were made with the New Symphony Orchestra of Tokyo for Japanese Parlophone starting in the 1920s. The most significant item from these sessions was a Mahler Fourth from 1930, the première recording of the work and the first complete electrical inscription of any Mahler symphony. The orchestra plays with a decidedly rough ensemble, and things are little better in a series of discs with a seemingly under-rehearsed La Scala Orchestra from 1931 which include a complete Beethoven First Symphony.

The present series of recordings was the first Konoye made with a world-class orchestra. His association with the Berlin Philharmonic dated back to 1924, and his conductorial studies under Muck and Kleiber solidified his links to Germany and its symphonic tradition.

The recording of the Mozart cuts the fifth variation in the finale to fit the work onto seven sides, although the eighth side in the set was left blank and the work could have been accommodated complete. The Haydn symphony was fit on six 10-inch sides by omitting most of the repeats. The anthems disc was presumably made to celebrate the Axis alliance between Germany and Japan. (The "Horst Wessel Lied" was routinely appended to the German national anthem during the Hitler era. Not surprisingly, these tracks have remained un-reissued in previous Konoye compilations.)

The sources for the transfers were laminated French Columbians for the Mozart and German Polydors for the Haydn symphony and the Mussorgsky. The rare anthems sides came from secondary sources provided by a Japanese collector. **Mark Obert-Thorn**

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

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## KONOYE

### THE COMPLETE BERLIN PHILHARMONIC RECORDINGS

MOZART  
SINFONIA CONCERTANTE  
FOR OBOE, CLARINET, HORN & BASSOON

HAYDN  
SYMPHONY No. 91

MUSSORGSKY  
A NIGHT ON THE BARE  
MOUNTAIN

STUDIO RECORDINGS, 1937-38

 **Obert-Thorn**

## Konoye Complete Berlin Philharmonic Recordings

MOZART Sinfonia Concertante for Oboe, Clarinet, Horn & Bassoon in E-flat **K297b**

- 1 1st mvt. - **Allegro** (12:13)
- 2 2nd mvt. - **Adagio** (8:30)
- 3 3rd mvt. - **Andantino con variazioni** (8:33)

Erich Venzke oboe

Alfred Bürkner clarinet

Martin Ziller horn

Oskar Rothensteiner bassoon

Recorded 4th January, 1937 in Berlin

Matrix nos.: CRX 46-2, 47-2, 48-2, 49-2, 50-2, 51-1 and 52-1

First issued on Columbia LX 661 through 663 and LXS 664

HAYDN Symphony No. 91 in E-flat **Hob. I:91**

- 4 1st mvt. - **Largo; Allegro assai** (6:38)
- 5 2nd mvt. - **Andante** (6:01)
- 6 3rd mvt. - **Menuett** (3:17)
- 7 4th mvt. - **Finale: Vivace** (3:29)

Recorded 21st April, 1938 in Lützowstrasse 111, Room VIII, Berlin

Matrix nos.: 7743 ½ gr 8, 7744 ½ gr 8, 7745 gr 8, 7746 ½ gr 8, 7747 ½ gr 8 and 7748 ½ gr 8

First issued on Grammophon 62792 through 62794

8 MUSSORGSKY **A Night on the Bare Mountain** (9:33)

Recorded 21st April, 1938 in Lützowstrasse 111, Room VIII, Berlin

Matrix nos.: 854 ½ gs and 855 ½ gs. First issued on Grammophon 67259

9 HAYDN **German National Anthem** (0:56)

10 TRADITIONAL **Horst Wessel Lied** (0:59)

Recorded 21st April, 1938 in Lützowstrasse 111, Room VIII, Berlin

Matrix no.: 7742 ½ gr 8. First issued on Grammophon 11273

11 TRADITIONAL (arr. KONOYE) **Japanese National Anthem (Kimigayo)** (2:07)

Recorded 21st April, 1938 in Lützowstrasse 111, Room VIII, Berlin

Matrix no.: 7741 ½ gr 8. First issued on Grammophon 11273

**Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Viscount Hidemaro Konoye**



Producer & Restoration Engineer  
**Mark Obert-Thorn**

Special thanks to **Kenzo Amoh**  
for providing source material

Pitch stabilization on Track 11  
by **Dimitrios Antos**  
(dantos@charter.net)

Cover artwork based on a  
photograph of **Hidemaro Konoye**

Total duration: **62:16**

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