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Wilhelm Backhaus

Beethoven Piano Concertos 4 and 5

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Backhaus and Clemens Krauss give us a fine performance, as one might expect, and from the recording point of view I find it commendable—more level in tone and more manageable than many LPs. The piano tone is mostly very good, but wears a little thin in the cadenza of the first movement, and perhaps the balance of soloist and orchestra is just a little less good in the second movement. The Backhaus-Krauss is, of course, much nearer to the Gieseking-Karajan than to the Rubinstein-Beecham. It is a restrained performance, with the design of each movement beautifully laid out before us, and with no attempt of any kind at display on the part of the soloist. The style of the performance may thus be called "classical".

H.F. The Gramophone, January 1952 (Reviewing LXT2629, *Piano Concerto No. 4*, except)

Five Emperors ; but this last of the house clearly reigns unchallenged in one respect—its recorded sound is fuller and richer than that of any of the others, and presents for the first time a completely acceptable piano tone. The balance, too, is good throughout ... The performance revealed by this good recording is unusual, and certainly unexpected. Backhaus can, and sometimes does, pin a Chopin Mazurka back by its ears and belabour it unmercifully. The Emperor Concerto, more able to stand up to such treatment, he approaches instead in a fashion almost to be described as coy ; when a lover goes a-wooing he could more appropriately indulge in these little fancies of hesitation, and of delicacy. I don't wish to suggest that it is erratic to a fault ; I do wish to suggest that there is thought and feeling behind this of Backhaus's performances, even though all will not find themselves permanently in agreement with its results. The Vienna Philharmonic do agree, or are made to seem to do so by Krauss they, too, are unburied and untrifled, and never fail to match their style to that of the soloist.

M.M. The Gramophone, January 1954 (Reviewing LXT2839, *Piano Concerto No. 5*, except)

Transfer notes

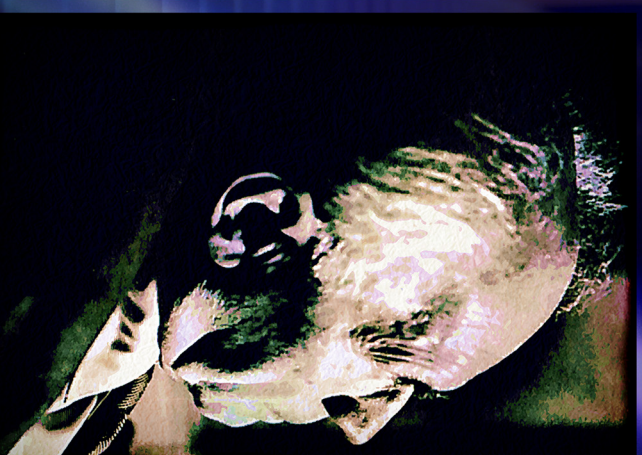
As with previous recordings in this series, I have been able to tackle not just the issues of background hiss and tonal balance, but also pitch. The Concerto No. 4 showed a gradual slide upwards through the second movement from a low start, whilst the finale drooped off at the very end. The *Empereur*, whilst benefiting from significantly finer sound quality, proved to be considerably erratic, pitch-wise, suggesting multiple and quite frequent edits between takes from different days or machines causing regular jumps up and down. Both concertos have been levelled out to concert pitch. I was able to release superb sound quality in both, and though the strings in the earlier recording still show a tendency towards shrillness, they are much improved over the original harsh sound here, without any impairment in the clarity of the piano tone which might have resulted from a straightforward reduction in treble. No such problems with the *Empereur*, where an already fine sound has been further rounded out, with greater extension in both treble and bass and a more generous overall feel from an excellent recording. **A.R.**

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BACKHAUS

Beethoven Edition



Volume 11

Piano Concerto No. 4 Piano Concerto No. 5

Wilhelm Backhaus, piano
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
Clemens Krauss, conductor

Decca Studio Recordings
1951 & 1953

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of **Wilhelm Backhaus**

Backhaus Beethoven Edition Volume 11

BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro moderato (17:25)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Andante con moto (4:36)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Rondo (Vivace) (10:42)

BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 5 in E flat major, Op. 73 "Emperor"

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro (19:45)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Adagio un poco mosso (7:26)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Rondo (Allegro) (10:17)

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra Clemens Krauss

Wilhelm Backhaus piano

Piano Concerto No. 4

Recorded May 1951
First issued as Decca LXT 2629
and Decca 78s KX28542-45

Piano Concerto No. 5

Recorded May 1953
First issued as Decca LXT 2839

Engineer **Cyril Windebank**
Producer **Victor Olof**

Recorded at **Grosser Saal,**
Musikverein, Vienna

Total duration: **70:11**

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