

COMPACT
DIGITAL AUDIO
PASC 353

Solomon

Beethoven Concerto and Sonatas

PRISTINE
AUDIO
XR

The Emperor is indeed fortunate among concertos, for each new version seems to manage to improve fairly consistently on the last. The latest is no exception: on general grounds I would place this new H.M.V. with Solomon at the top of the list, where previously I had preferred the D.G.G. with Kempf.

Not altogether expectedly, the new performance seems to concentrate on brilliance. To some small extent an occasional breadth of phrase or an occasional relaxation of tension are sacrificed to the primary end but it cannot be said that the result is not arguably suitable to the nature of the concerto. The Philharmonia, under Menges, and Solomon are at one in this: the orchestra lacks nothing whatever in brilliance, but its wind soloists do not always sound to be fully at their ease. That is not to say that anywhere there is a bar of wind-playing that would not pass muster in any orchestra in the world; but it is to say that occasionally the Philharmonia do sound less distinctive than usual.

The concerted brilliance is naturally in principal evidence in the outer movements; and it combines with a very sure rhythmic grip on Solomon's part to present the finale in a most effective light. The coda is particularly striking. Solomon delays beginning his *ritardando* to something like the point at which Beethoven marked it, and the notes of the timpani part are clearly audible as such. The result is a highly successful negotiation of one of the traditional danger spots.

The clear timpani at this point are symptomatic of the first-class recording. It is exceptionally clean, and brilliant to a degree matching that of the performance; and this without any suspicion of shallowness in the piano tone, which is full and rounded. The balance between piano and orchestra is nearly everywhere ideal, as is the internal balance of the orchestra. The sense of one passage in the slow movement would be clarified if the flute were slightly more prominent, but happy the recording in which such a comment is worth making!

Happy this recording in any case, and I have no hesitation in strongly recommending it.

M.M. The Gramophone, January 1956 - *review of Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 5*

Transfer notes

Solomon was without doubt one of the foremost Beethoven specialists of his era, as this superb performance of the *Empire* amply demonstrates - it was a request for this particular recording which prompted this short series of releases. Alas at this time EMI's adoption of stereo was somewhat patchy - a year later Solomon was still making some of his final sonata recordings in mono. I have chosen two of his 1952 sonata recordings from a similar period in Beethoven's output to join the *Empire* here - both again brilliant played and recorded, and all three sounding simply wonderful in these new transfers after 32-bit XR processing. In the case of both sonatas and concerto I was also able to eliminate a hint of wow and flutter present in the originals, firming up the piano tone considerably as well as correcting very slightly wayward pitches (both up and down) to concert standard A=440Hz. AR

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
SARL Pristine Audio, Le Bourg, 24610 St. Méard de Gurçon, France - Tel. (00) 33 653 821857
www.pristineclassical.com

COMPACT
DIGITAL AUDIO
PASC 353

PRISTINE
AUDIO
XR

Solomon

Beethoven

Piano Concerto No. 5 "Emperor"
Piano Sonata No. 21 "Waldstein"
Piano Sonata No. 26 "Les Adieux"

Philharmonia Orchestra
Herbert Menges

London studio recordings, 1955 and 1952

Solomon Beethoven

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

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro (19:29)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Adagio un poco mosso (8:22)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Rondo (Allegro) (9:56)

The Philharmonia Orchestra Herbert Menges

Piano Sonata No. 21, *Waldstein*, in C major, Op. 53

- 4 1st mvt. - Allegro con brio (10:14)
- 5 2nd mvt. - Introduzione - Adagio molto (3:54)
- 6 3rd mvt. - Rondo - Allegretto moderato - Prestissimo (9:19)

Piano Sonata No. 26, *Les Adieux*, in E flat major, Op. 81a

- 7 1st mvt - Adagio - Allegro (6:42)
- 8 2nd mvt - Andante espressivo (3:49)
- 9 3rd mvt - Vivacissimamente (5:26)

Solomon piano

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of **Solomon**

Piano Concerto No. 6

Transfer from EMI HLS 7070
Recorded 13 April 1955
at Abbey Road Studio 1, London
First issued as HMV ALP.1300

Piano Sonata No. 21

Transfer from EMI HLM 7099
Recorded 15 June 1952
at Abbey Road Studio 3, London
First issued as HMV ALP.1160

Piano Sonata No. 26

Transfer from EMI HLM 7101
Recorded 20 November 1952
at Abbey Road Studio 3, London
First issued as HMV BLP.1051

Total duration: **77:11**

For a full catalogue visit
www.pristineclassical.com
or call : (00) 33 979 622713

© 2012 **Pristine Audio**

PRISTINE
AUDIO