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Bartók Piano Concertos

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STEREO

At very long last we have a worthy recording of the Bartók Second Concerto, a work whose previous interpreters (including the admirable Andor Foldes, whose performance received Bartók's own blessing) have all suffered from recording qualities ranging from indifferent to abysmal. This will be valuable in helping to spread a knowledge of an important work in Bartók's output which is rarely heard in the concert hall, probably because of the ferocious difficulty of the solo part - Bartók seems to have had in mind huge hands with permanent built-in octave and thirds mechanisms. The music does not deserve this neglect, and though it is "tougher" in idiom than the more mellow Third Concerto it has in fact had a consistently successful reception ever since its first performance (by the composer) in 1933. A bravura, lithe work, it abounds in motor energy and in contrapuntal vigour and resource (much of the material of the first movement - which is played entirely without the strings - reappears in inversion, or even in retrograde inversion, in the finale): the central part of the *Adagio* is a brilliantly fantastic delicate scherzo which looks forward to the *Sonata for two pianos and percussion*. Soloist and orchestra co-operate in exemplary fashion in a performance remarkable for its precision of ensemble, clarity and exactness of detail: Geza Anda in particular is to be congratulated for the way he romps through all the difficulties. The recording is excellent, the stereo even better than the mono.

L. S. *The Gramophone*, May 1961 - *excerpt, review of DGG LP issue of Concertos 2 & 3*

Transfer notes

These recordings, drawn from a later DGG pressing which brought together Bartók's three piano concertos and the Piano Rhapsody in a 1970s double-LP, are still prized more than fifty years later as among the very finest interpretations of these works. Brilliant performances were captured very well in fine stereo by Deutsche Grammophon's engineers in the Jesus Christus-Kirche in Berlin.

As has previously been the case with the finest recordings of this era, I had to be certain there was more to be brought out of these recordings through XR remastering before committing fully to this project. A series of extensive transfer and listening tests convinced me that, indeed, there was. Careful pitch stabilisation has helped reduce or eliminate wow, flutter, pitch drift and a noticeable edit in the Third Concerto where the pitch drops from one take to the other. The overall sound is now fuller, richer and clearer, with a hint of the musically-sympathetic acoustic properties of Birmingham Symphony Hall filling out the rather artificially-dry original sound to great effect. **A.R.**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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BARTÓK The 3 Piano Concertos

Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra

Geza Anda, piano • Ferenc Fricsay, conductor

Stereo studio recordings, 1959/60

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a photograph of
Ferenc Fricsay and **Geza Anda**

Concerto No. 1

Recorded 17 October 1960
Jesus Christus-Kirche, Berlin
First issued as DGG SLPM 138708

Concertos No. 2 & No. 3

Recorded 10 September 1959
Jesus Christus-Kirche, Berlin
First issued as DGG SLPM 138111

Transfers from DGG 2539 061/62

Total duration: **78:46**

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Bartók Piano Concertos

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1 Sz.83

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro moderato - Allegro - Allegro moderato (9:14)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Andante (8:36)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Allegro molto (7:30)

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2 in G Sz.95

- 4 1st mvt. - Allegro (9:57)
- 5 2nd mvt. - Adagio - Presto - Adagio (12:26)
- 6 3rd mvt. - Allegro molto (6:33)

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 3 in E Sz.119

- 7 1st mvt. - Allegretto (7:18)
- 8 2nd mvt. - Adagio religioso - Poco più mosso - Tempo 1 (10:22)
- 9 3rd mvt. - Allegro vivace (6:50)

Geza Anda piano

Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra Ferenc Fricsay

