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WALTER GIESEKING

plays Beethoven Piano Concertos

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Giesecking, at the height of his powers in 1944, is deft, delicate, infinitely resourceful. From the moment of the piano's re-entry, Giesecking points our attention away from heroic postures (though he has strengths in reserve) towards that visionary mood which underwrites the whole of the Violin Concerto and subtly pervades the Emperor, too. The recording was made at a concert in Berlin and claims to be a genuine stereo recording, a precocious example of the highly sophisticated Berlin Radio system and its Magnetophon recorders. Clearly it is a stereo recording in the same way that an 1840s Fox Talbot is a photograph, but the stereo images are vague and the level of background hiss is almost unacceptably high. That said, the beautifully natural, slightly recessed concert hall image serves Giesecking well; and the orchestra, which is immaculately conducted by Arthur Rother, is finely focused. In the latter part of the first movement cadenza artillery can be heard dimly popping and pummeling in the background, much as it probably did at the time of the work's premiere in war-torn Vienna. Giesecking, ever the poet and professional, remains perfectly poised, whilst the horns sweep calmly and steadily in.

R.O., Gramophone, January 1980
Review of LP issue of Giesecking's 'Emperor' Concerto

Producer's Note

The 1944 recording of Walter Giesecking playing Beethoven's *Emperor* Concerto sits among a select few stereo recordings made experimentally prior to the 1950s, the earliest dating back to the early 1930s. It was the development of tape recording which made stereo feasible - not until 1958 would disc replay catch up - and the Germans were a considerable way ahead on tape technology by 1944. Even so, the high levels of hiss on this recording - unsurprising given that each channel has half the tape width and thus double the noise levels - shows much was left to be done.

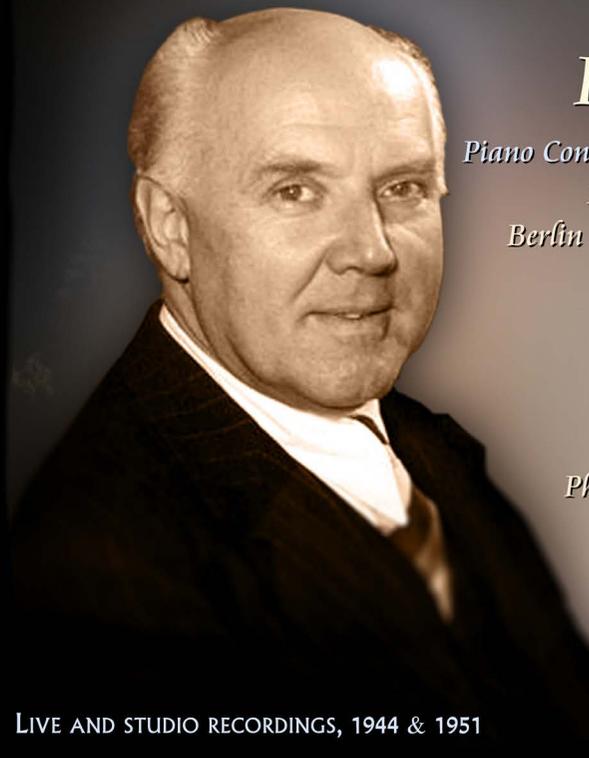
As well as improvements to the sometimes wayward and ill-defined stereo imagery, I've sought to reduce tape hiss, enhance the overall tonal balance, flatten out wow and flutter, and give this historic recording as good an outing as it's ever had. The 1951 EMI studio recording of the Fourth Concerto was of course made in easier conditions (no anti-aircraft fire in the background either!) but was far from perfect. I've been able to fill out the orchestral tone considerably, whilst cutting tape hiss back. The piano tone remains mellow and warm, but occasionally less than brilliant during louder passages, where I've had to fight against some peak distortion.

Andrew Rose

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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STEREO

GIESEKING



Beethoven

Piano Concerto No. 5 "Emperor"
1944 Stereo Recording
Berlin Reichsender Orchestra
Artur Rother

Piano Concerto No. 4
1951 EMI Recording
Philharmonia Orchestra
Herbert von Karajan

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LIVE AND STUDIO RECORDINGS, 1944 & 1951

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**Cover artwork based on a photograph of
Walter Giesecking**GIESEKING** *Beethoven Piano Concertos***BEETHOVEN** Piano Concerto No. 5 in E flat, "Emperor", Op. 73

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro (19:11)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Adagio un poco mosso (7:29)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Rondo (Allegro) (9:54)

Berlin Reichsender Orchestra *Artur Rother***BEETHOVEN** Piano Concerto No. 4 in G, Op. 58

- 4 1st mvt. - Allegro moderato (16:48)
- 5 2nd mvt. - Andante con moto (5:04)
- 6 3rd mvt. - Rondo (Vivace) (9:54)

Philharmonia Orchestra *Herbert von Karajan*Walter Giesecking *piano***Piano Concerto No. 5**Recorded Autumn 1944, Berlin
Producer: Dr. Hans Joachim von Braunmühle
Transfer from Varèse Sarabande VC 81080
A stereo recording**Piano Concerto No. 4**Recorded 9-11 July 1951, Kingsway Hall, London
Producer: Walter Legge
Engineer: Douglas Larter
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