

Subject: [NEWS] PRISTINE CLASSICAL 19th November 2010: Furtwängler conducts Bruckner's 5th; Abendroth conducts Beethoven's 5th
From: Pristine Classical <music@pristineclassical.com>
Date: Fri, 19 Nov 2010 16:09:06 +0100

Pristine News: Friday 19th November, 2010



Hermann Abendroth (1883-1956)

In this week's newsletter:

- [New this week](#) - Furtwängler's 1942 Berlin performance of Bruckner's 5th, continuing our series
- [New this week](#) - An Abendroth collection from Mark Obert-Thorn, from Beethoven to Sibelius
- [Editorial](#) - The Northern Lights
- [PADA](#) - David Oistrakh plays Chopin and Ravel trios with Knushevitzky and Oborin
- [Recent Reviews:](#)

Dohnányi in London - Audiophile Audition

"The seamless splicing of the 78 rpm sides would entirely make us forget the antiquity of this inscription."

Our Sales Support e-mail addresses:

For CD orders: cdsupport@pristineclassical.com

For download orders: downloadsupport@pristineclassical.com

Music Indexes:

Artist Index: [A](#) - [B](#) - [C](#) - [D](#) - [E](#) - [F](#) - [G](#) - [H](#) - [I](#) - [J](#) - [K](#) - [L](#) - [M](#) - [N](#) - [O](#) - [P](#) - [Q](#) - [R](#) - [S](#) - [T](#) -
[U](#) - [V](#) - [W](#) - [X](#) - [Y](#) - [Z](#)

Composer Index: [A](#) - [B](#) - [C](#) - [D](#) - [E](#) - [F](#) - [G](#) - [H](#) - [I](#) - [J](#) - [K](#) - [L](#) - [M](#) - [N](#) - [O](#) - [P](#) - [Q](#) - [R](#) - [S](#) -
[T](#) - [U](#) - [V](#) - [W](#) - [X](#) - [Y](#) - [Z](#)

Editorial - The Northern Lights

It's been a busy week this week, and I've had little time to reflect on matters musical, so I thought I'd let you know what I've been up to instead. Last Tuesday morning we dashed (or rather crawled) through the Bordeaux rush hour traffic to catch a flight first to London, then on north to Edinburgh. Here I had three and a half hours to spare so I caught a cab into the centre of the city, which dropped me off next to the ancient castle at the top of the Royal Mile. After a quick lunch I strolled around, noting that every other shop appeared to be selling half-price kilts and heavily reduced sporrans, whilst playing endless piped (literally!) music - of massed bagpipes wailing recent pop hits. Fortunately I found solace in an excellent bar, "Whiski", where a very knowledgeable barman was able to guide me through three of Scotlands finest and rarest malt whiskies.

From there it was further north, by a small Saab 340 turboprop plane, to the remote Shetland Islands, about which I wrote a few weeks ago. Here my duties stretched to a short presentation at the launch of a new CD from archive taped recordings of a local fisherman and musician *extraordinaire* in the country blues field, Thomas Fraser.

The great thing about preparing a presentation such as this is that you start doing a little research and come up with all sorts of interesting nuggets of information - I began with a potted history of home and tape recordings - Fraser began recording his music on a Grundig reel to reel recorder when electricity came to his small island in 1953. Well it turns out that he was reviving a tradition I had been unaware of, but which had been all the rage among cylinder-player owners

half a century earlier and had been lost with the widespread adoption of the flat disc following the world's very first audio format "wars". Many cylinder phonographs sold in the period between the 1880s and the mid 1910s were equipped not only to play back but also to record. You could cut a recording directly into wax and hope for up to 100 replays before it wore out - and then the machine would allow you literally to scrape back the wax layer, erasing your recording and thus offering the chance to record again. Apparently thousands of family cylinder recordings survive to this day.

The next important milestone in the path towards 1950s home recording is the 1925 adoption of the microphone, and with it, electrical recording. This paved the way by the late 1920s for experiments into alternative means of storage, culminating in the Blattnerphone, the first primitive magnetic tape recorder in 1929 or 1930. Development of magnetic tape recording was concentrated in Germany and its story quickly gets tangled up with the Nazi regime and wartime use - but this research also brought us marvels of sonic reproduction such as the 1942 Furtwängler Bruckner Fifth we've released today.

By the end of the war the US military was keen to find out what electronics and radio secrets the Germans had developed, cancelling a slew of German patents along the way, and soon a couple of tape recorders were being whisked back from Radio Frankfurt to the US for some rapid re-engineering in the hope they might find a role in the Hollywood film industry. One such machine caught the eye of Bing Crosby, eager to get a break from his weekly live radio broadcast schedule, and he promptly invested in the new machines and a little-known 6-man electrical motor and generator company in California known as Ampex. By 1948 the first commercial Ampex tape machines were being sold to broadcasters in the US for a phenomenal \$4000 each - in British terms today, based on average house prices then and now, this equates to over £130,000.

The new technology quickly caught on - such that Thomas Fraser could somehow justify spending the cash (as did a surprising number of other Shetlanders in the months and years to come) to purchase one of the first domestic tape machines just five years later for around £60 - still a large amount of money for most people then; some put it at well over £1000 today, for which one needs to catch a lot of lobsters!

My short potted history talk then moved on to an attempt to explain the rudiments of XR remastering and why it is particularly needed for amateur recordings such as those made by Fraser: Although by the mid-to-late 1950s professional microphones were becoming increasingly accurate and capable of resolving neutrally the sounds they captured, this was not the case for the basic domestic models then available. Fortunately the medium of tape was far more capable of holding what little bottom and top end frequencies the microphones did manage to pick up than is apparent from a casual listen, and this is exactly where XR remastering comes in, to recover these buried frequencies and restore them to something close to their proper place in the sound spectrum. In this case I had assembled a generic "male country voice with acoustic guitar" reference, a sonic print averaged out from over 3 hours of different performers and recordings, with which to begin the re-equalisation processes which performed wonders on even the most primitive of the Shetland recordings.

After my short talk I was free to enjoy the music. There can be few places on Earth where music seems to be so central to life - it seems almost everyone you meet is a virtuoso of some description or other. Even the waitress who served my Chinese meal in Lerwick had just returned from an audition at the Royal Scottish Academy of

Music and Drama in Glasgow - she was 17 and hoping to become an opera singer.

Meanwhile each night the Festival stage was packed with acoustic music, from traditional Scottish and Shetland reels, to folk, jazz and all flavours of country and bluegrass. And as the concerts ended the word quietly spread as to whose house was being opened up for a night of continued music-making - people crowded in, making it hard to actually hold an instrument, let alone play it, and impromptu groups split off into different rooms for the sheer enjoyment of whatever tunes came to mind. I heard more fiddle reels, some superb Django-Reinhardt-tinged jazz, old country music and more - and with guests both from the Scottish mainland and major recording artists from as far afield as Nashville, Tennessee and West Virginia, there was no doubt about the authenticity of it all. I even found myself tinkling the ivories and strumming an acoustic guitar myself in the wee hours before dawn!

Perhaps the most moving part of the trip came on Sunday afternoon, in a small chapel which had been commandeered for a gospel music event to raise money for a local fishermen's mission fund. As a chill wind blew outside and a light dusting of snow fell to the ground, inside the *kirk* I was cocooned by the warmth of a couple of hundred well-honed voices, harmonising together to make a sound that was both deeply human and profoundly spiritual.

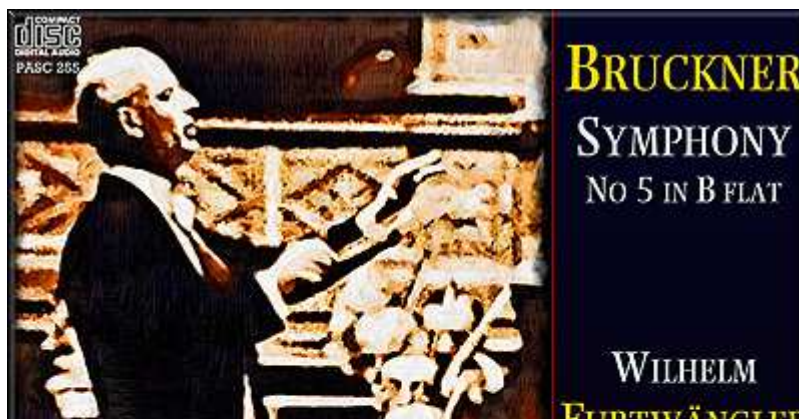
I returned with memories of almost continuous music-making, a rare view of the glorious Northern Lights, and a new guitar. All I need now is a book of chords...

Andrew Rose

New release today:

[BRUCKNER Symphony No 5](#)

Pristine Audio PASC 255



Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
conductor **Wilhelm Furtwängler**
Recorded Berlin, 1942

XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, November 2010
Cover artwork based on a photograph of Furtwängler

Total duration: 69:33
©2010 Pristine Audio.



For more download and CD options, see our [website](#)

The FLAC downloads:



- **BRUCKNER** Symphony No. 5 in B flat major, WAB105 (1878 Version Ed. Robert Haas - No significant difference to Nowak [1935]) [[notes](#) / [score](#)]

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
conductor **Wilhelm Furtwängler**

Recorded Alte Philharmonie, Berlin, 25-28 October 1942

BRUCKNER Symphony No. 5

We continue our series of Furtwängler's live Bruckner symphony recordings with this classic 1942 concert performance of the Fifth, widely regarded as perhaps his finest interpretation of the work.

Of the wartime Berlin recordings thus far tackled in this series, this early taped recording has been perhaps the cleanest and clearest, with no evidence of the peak distortion evident in contemporary recordings. The sound is astonishingly clear, vibrant and clean, and great efforts have been made to reduce or eliminate completely the extraneous noises of both audience and musicians in order to better concentrate on the music itself.

Boasting an astonishingly wide frequency response and dynamic range, this might have been recorded in the 1960s - it's fabulous!



Symphony No 5, First movement

Introduction (Adagio) - Allegro

(Ambient Stereo version)

Notes on the transfers:

Of the live wartime recordings of Furtwängler that I have thus far tackled, this recording of Bruckner's Fifth Symphony, which dates among the earlier performances to be preserved on the then-nascent tape technology developed in Germany before and during the Second World War, has proved to be one of the best-preserved as well as best-made. Whereas other recordings are prone to overload distortion, amongst other flaws, the Bruckner Fifth is remarkably clean throughout. The chief shortcoming was a rather variable and unpredictable degree of high treble hiss and shash, which has responded better to manual control on a phrase-by-phrase basis than by using blanket noise reduction or equalisation. By working in this way I've been able to preserve some very impressively-extended upper frequencies, particularly as heard in the brass in the symphony's finale.

As with the other recordings in this series, I've spent considerable time eliminating or reducing audience noise, as well as various clicks, bangs and scrapes which appear to have emanated from the players themselves. Fortunately the magic of this particular performance appears to have captivated the audience to an extent that they were able to maintain their attention well and not succumb to too much bronchial activity during the quieter sections of the work - as is all too often the case.

Andrew Rose

Available as **320kbps mono MP3, 16-bit mono & Ambient Stereo FLAC, 24-bit Ambient Stereo FLAC, Mono & Ambient Stereo CD**
or listen on demand with [Pristine Audio Direct Access](#) (PADA)

New release today:

[HERMANN ABENDROTH Conducts](#)

Pristine Audio PASC 256



Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
Berlin State Opera Orchestra
Paris Conservatoire Orchestra
Hermann Abendroth, conductor
Recorded 1936-42

For more download and CD options, see our [website](#)



Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn
Cover artwork based on a photograph of Hermann Abendroth

Total duration: 77:45
©2010 Pristine Audio

The downloads:



- **BEETHOVEN:** [Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67](#) [[notes](#) / [score](#)]
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
 Recorded 22nd November, 1937 in Berlin
 Matrix nos.: xxNSK 23, 24, 25, 26, 27-2, 28, 29 and 30
 First issued on Odeon O-7898 through 7901
- **REGER:** [Variations on a Theme of Mozart, Op. 132](#) [[notes](#) / [score](#)]
Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, Paris
 Recorded 6th May, 1942 in Paris
 Matrix nos.: 2LA 3664-1, 3665-1, 3666-1 and 3667-1
 First issued on Disque Gramophone DB 5197 and 5198
- **LISZT (arr. Müller/Berghaus):** [Hungarian Rhapsody No. 1](#) [[notes](#) / [score](#)]
Berlin State Opera Orchestra
 Recorded 19th June, 1937 in the Philharmonie, Berlin
 Matrix nos.: xxB 8617 and 8618
 First issued on Odeon O-7734
- **LISZT (arr. Müller):** [Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2](#) [[notes](#) / [score](#)]
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
 Recorded 1st October, 1938 in the Philharmonie, Berlin
 Matrix nos.: xxB 8575 and 8576
 First issued on Odeon O-7887
- **DOHNÁNYI:** [Wedding Waltz from The Veil of Pierrette \(Ballet Suite\)](#) [[notes](#)]
Berlin State Opera Orchestra
 Recorded 19th June, 1937 in the Philharmonie, Berlin
 Matrix nos.: Be 11723 and 11724
 First issued on Odeon O-4759
- **SIBELIUS:** [Finlandia, Op. 26](#) [[notes](#) / [score](#)]
Berlin State Opera Orchestra
 Recorded 2nd October, 1936 in Berlin
 Matrix nos.: xxNSK 14 and 15
 First issued on Odeon O-7896

Hermann Abendroth, conductor

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn

ABENDROTH Conducts Beethoven, Liszt, Sibelius et al

Mark Obert-Thorn's contribution this month also visits Germany for this collection of recordings made before and during the Second World War under the baton of Hermann Abendroth.

Beginning with a fine Beethoven Fifth, it takes the listener on a fascinating musical journey through Reger's excellent Mozart Variations, two of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies, a waltz from Dohnanyi's ballet The Veil of Pierrette, to end up with Sibelius's magnificent Finlandia.

As always the transfers of these rare and unusual recordings is up to Mark Obert-Thorn's famously impeccable standards, making this set a must-have for collectors everywhere.



LISZT: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 1
Berlin State Opera Orchestra, 1937

Notes on the recordings:

Abendroth's Beethoven Fifth was set down during the same month that Furtwängler's classic prewar HMV set was completed, and featured the same orchestra. It has been transferred here from British Parlophone shellacs. The rare wartime Paris set of the Reger Mozart Variations (presented as issued, sans Fugue) was, rather unusually, recorded by Odeon for release on French HMV. The dim, hissy sound is inherent in the original recording, although I have tried to bring out as much detail as exists in the shellacs. The first Liszt Hungarian Rhapsody came from a laminated Australian Parlophone disc, while the remaining items were transferred from German Odeon pressings. Some inner-groove distortion will be noticeable due to the high recording volume levels at the ends of the works.

Mark Obert-Thorn

Available as **320kbps mono MP3, 16-bit mono FLAC, Mono CD**
or listen on demand with [Pristine Audio Direct Access](#) (PADA)

New MP3 transfers only at PADA Exclusives

by **Dr. John Duffy**
in Ambient Stereo

Download or stream this recording and many others from only **One Euro a week!**
Oistrakh, Knushevitzky and Orborin
play Piano Trios in 1958

Hundreds of historic recordings are available for listening and **free MP3 download**
to subscribers to [PADA Exclusives](#), our €1/week streamed audio service.

Other subscription offers give you full access to our entire online catalogue



David Oistrakh

Pick of the reviews

Chopin

Piano Trio in G minor

Ravel

Piano Trio in A minor

[Audiophile Audition](#)

'We can listen with enthusiasm and admiration to these highly accomplished performances.'

David Oistrakh, violin

Sviatoslav Knushevitzky, cello

Lev Oborin, piano

Recorded in 1958

Transfer from LP:

Monitor MC2069

Dohnanyi in London

DOHNANYI: Variations on a Nursery Tune, Op. 25; Ruralia Hungarica, Op. 32B, No. 2 and No. 5; Liszkegy

MOZART: Piano Concerto No. 17 in G Major, K. 453

LISZT: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 1

BERLIOZ: Hungarian March from The Damnation of Faust (2 versions)

Remastered by
Dr John Duffy
In Ambient Stereo



EGRESSY: Szozat

Erno Dohnanyi, piano and conductor
London Symphony Orchestra
Lawrence Collingwood (in Op. 25)

Free 7-day Trial

Pristine Audio [PASC 252](#), 79:37

Producer and engineer Mark Obert-Thorn restores the 1928 and 1931 sessions composer-pianist Erno von Dohnanyi - who toured with the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra in London - found time between 16-18 June 1928 to record for Columbia. Dohnanyi (1877-1960) inscribed the Berlioz Hungarian March twice, first for Columbia (16 June 1928) and then for HMV in Queen's Hall, 18 June 1928. Dohnanyi returned to London in 1931 for February sessions in Kingsway Hall that produced the selection from *Ruralia Hungarica* and the Op. 25 Variations with Lawrence Collingwood and the LSO.

The Mozart G Major Concerto (17 June 1928) represents its first inscription on record, and the performance--which utilizes Dohnanyi's own cadenzas--proves striking for its youthful flair and elegance of style. Dohnanyi, for all his luster and emotional focus, does not sacrifice Mozart's pert humor, especially his deliberate breaking of the musical line in parody of the C.P.E. Bach style. The last movement easily becomes a wind serenade or piano quintet at key points, and the Budapest Philharmonic principals provide an alert, intelligent accompaniment to Dohnanyi's inflamed keyboard pyrotechnics. The middle section of the last movement parodies Mozart himself, especially the patter between Papageno and Papagena in *The Magic Flute*. A magical rendition, often explosive and always lively and eminently musical.

The Liszt F Minor Rhapsody (16 June 1928) indulges more in gypsy colors than echt Magyar sources, but its rich orchestration allows Dohnanyi's Budapest players--whom he had led since 1919--to indulge their fluent and aerial acrobatics in grand style, the melodic tissue directly related to the Hungarian Fantasia for Piano and Orchestra. The string glissandi and harp cadenza lead to an exalted friss section, witty and electric. That this performance provided Ferenc Fricsay with the very model of his own musicianship seems irrefutable.

Producer Obert-Thorn calls the acoustic for the first Berlioz inscription "unforgiving," and the dry spots in the strings' countertheme sadly lack resonance. The HMV venue, Queen's Hall, indeed proves "more expansive," to quote Obert-Thorn. Even so, both recordings feature stirring, ominous bass chords and tremolandos, and the last pages allow the furies their moment in the martial sun. Obert-Thorn includes two songs or hymns, Egressy's *Szozat* (Summons) and Dohnanyi's *Hiszkegy* (I Believe), recorded in Queen's Hall 18 June 1928. The Egressy proves an ardent work, reminiscent of passionate moments in Sibelius. Dohnanyi's wafts an ardent string chorale that occasionally reminds one of Dvorak or Slavonic organ sonority. The *Molto vivace* (No. 5) from Op. 32B is overtly a Brahms Hungarian Dance, cross-fertilized by ripe Lisztian orchestration.

The No. 2 from *Ruralia Hungarica* (23 February 1931) is marked *Presto ma non tanto* and exploits a kind of pentatonic modality for its witty and skittish effects. Some will detect a vague reference to the fast sections of Dvorak's *Czech Suite*. Dohnanyi's most familiar score, the 1914 Variations of Nursery Theme (21, 23 February 1931) parodies any number of Wagnerian conventions, along with the obvious Mozart allusion in the theme. In the course of thirteen variations, Dohnanyi laughs at the Viennese waltz, modal harmonies in Faure, Dukas' *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, a tune or two from Tchaikovsky, and several Debussy formulas. The brilliance of the writing likely has the Brahms *Handel Variations* as its source, with a clear variation *alla musette*, in deference to that same Brahms work. The seamless splicing of the 78 rpm sides would entirely make us forget the antiquity of this inscription, except for the crackle of the originals, which easily yields to the elastic and blazing polish of the musicianship.

We must applaud the breadth of this restoration, casting a covetous eye to those Remington LPs Dohnanyi cut of music by Schumann and Beethoven, as well as collaborative work with violinist Albert Spalding, all of which deserve a return to our contemporary sound world.

Gary Lemco

NOTE: This e-mail is going out to our most recently compiled mailing list of recent customers and existing list members. If you do not wish to receive any further e-mails from Pristine Classical please contact me directly by e-mail at this address and I'll remove your address from our list immediately. Alternatively [click here to unsubscribe](#) - please ensure you reply from the same e-mail address that this mailing was sent to.

--

Andrew Rose
Pristine Classical
www.pristineclassical.com