

EMI, but died before he completed it. While this Italian label may have reissued some of these EMI sonatas, they are without notes, and the source is simply listed as "Studio Recordings, 1956" for the first and "Live Recordings, 1949" for the second. The monaural 1956 studio sound is satisfactory but acoustically dull. The 1949 recordings require a great deal of tolerance, are shallow sounding, and have some shatter distortion, among other defects.

As with the previous release, Giesecking can be uneven in approach, somewhat matter-of-fact, and routine. Some of the staccato playing, such as in the Scherzo from Sonata 18, is too precisely articulated, with the music pushed towards the inconsequential. It's a rather strange approach to Beethoven, and one that just doesn't work.

No such problems exist with Sonatas 19 and 20, two of the better performances in the series. They are gently played, with no attempt to push them beyond their musical means. There is a slight wow in the closing 'Tempo di Menuetto' of the latter one.

The *Waldstein* (21) begins rather tentatively but soon asserts itself. Although it's a studio recording, I detected a brief error in the closing Rondo that should have been corrected. While hardly a favorite performance of this well-known work, it is more than respectable, and does no discredit to the artist. Sonata 23, the *Appassionata*, on the other hand, is an impetuous and thrilling account of this favorite. Giesecking plays with an abandon that he rarely allows himself in the other sonatas. The final chord is unfortunately clipped off. He tends to do that a lot.

Sonatas 30 and 31 present a few major problems. The flippant phrasing in 30's Prestissimo may raise some eyebrows, as will a sense of the pianist going through the motions to get things out of the way quickly.

Sonata 16 has plenty of verve, if little humor in the opening movement. If it tends towards the speedier side of things, with sound as described above, the balance of the piece goes well despite the dropped notes. Sonatas 24-29 combine some interesting insights along with rushed tempos and glossed-over errors. It's easier to forgive some mistakes than it is the tempo aberrations.

While Giesecking scores reasonably well in Sonata 28, the *Hammerklavier* is something of a mess in its opening movement. Wrong notes abound, and tempos are relentlessly hurried. But the final movement has a lot of spontaneity.

Undoubtedly many collectors will treasure these performances. While I'm not among them, there is considerable good even among the less than fortunate items. Readers con-

cerned with repeats will find that they are not always observed. Great musician that Giesecking was, Beethoven was definitely not one of his strong points.

BECKER

**BRUCKNER: *Symphony 7***

Berlin Philharmonic/ Jascha Horenstein  
Pristine 203—59 minutes

This is a digital restoration of a 1928 78-rpm original, the first electrical recording of the work released. The audio restoration was made by Mark Obert-Thorn, an accomplished expert in the field. The broadband surface noise has been reduced, though not totally eliminated, in line with Obert-Thorn's limited interventionist philosophy. What remains is not disturbing; and the sound itself, though limited in dynamic range, is clear and undistorted. He uses the Nowak edition, where cymbals and triangle reinforce the climax in II, though its full effect is not realized owing to the inherently limited dynamic range of the original 78s. By 1928 the frequency range captured by electrical 78s had been extended to roughly 50-8000 Hz, good enough to capture all the fundamentals and most of the audible harmonics in orchestral music. So this recording is limited only in dynamic range and enjoyable to most listeners.

Jascha Horenstein was only 30 years old. The BPO's principal conductor at the time was Furtwangler, who had shown little or no interest in recordings. It is probably just as well, for Horenstein leads a nicely shaped and generally well-paced performance. At 59 minutes, the grass does not grow under his feet, though he never seems to be in much of a hurry. His tempos are flexible and subtly altered to obtain a slight flexibility of line without straying into gross distortion. While it is equalled musically and outranged sonically by more recent stereo recordings such as VPO/Bohm from DG, it is surely effective as a historical release, and exhibits Jascha Horenstein and the Berlin Philharmonic in a most favorable light. My only slight reservation has to do with the omission of any program notes, which nevertheless can be downloaded in a visit to [www.pristineclassical.com](http://www.pristineclassical.com).

MCKELVEY

**DVORAK: *In Nature's Realm; Cello Concerto;*  
SUK: *Raduz & Mahulena***

Alexandr Vectomov, vc;  
Central Bohemia Symphony  
Orchestral Concert 9—79 minutes

This concert was recorded in the Podebrady Theatre about 1973. We don't know who the conductor is. Today Podebrady is a small spa town on the Elbe River in the Czech Republic