

Antonin Dvorak – Cello Concerto In B minor (Fourier) [1955]

Written by bluesever

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1. *Allegro*
2. *Adagio, ma non troppo*
3. *Finale. Allegro Moderato-andante-allegro vivo*

Pierre Fournier, cello
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra,
Rafael Kubelik, conductor

One of the more delectable fruits of the recent renewed interest in mono recordings is this wonderful 180-gram LP from Japan. This 1954 Decca/London recording of the crown jewel of the cello concerto repertoire restores a truly memorable performance, with the old reliable ffr sonics polished to a burnished glow.

Fournier has always been a great cellist, but I think credit for the special eloquence of his playing here must be shared with the inspired contributions of Kubelik and the orchestra. I can hardly imagine more instinctive, penetrating conducting or more warmly expressive orchestral playing. Whatever the reason, the occasion drew from Fournier an emotionally charged performance, subtly tender and ardently dramatic as the music demands.

Comparisons: first up, Fournier's 1962 recording with George Szell and the Berlin Philharmonic on a DG LP. Szell is his familiar unsentimental self, Fournier aristocratic and right in step with his conductor. Pablo Casals' justly acclaimed, surprisingly good-sounding 1937 EMI recording with Szell and the Czech Philharmonic is noble, even Apollonian. Rostropovich with the great Vaclav Talich leading the Czech Philharmonic (@ 1950?) Is sui generis in its unique blend of

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fiery drama and expansive beauty. Jacqueline du Pre is unrivaled for sheer tonal beauty, and she apparently inspired Daniel Barenboim to eschew his usual Furtwaenglerisms (Chicago Symphony, EMI). Fournier/Kubelik need defer to none of these. In short, a record to treasure, and worth the premium tariff for any lover of this concerto. ---Wayne Donnelly, enjoythemusic.com

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