



A. Bruckner: Symphony No. 3

aud 92.543

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This is a fascinating audiophile's introduction to the effect of the remastering engineers apply which happily comes allied to a good performance of Bruckner's 3rd Symphony from Kubelik and "his" orchestra.

As part of Audite's Listen & Compare series (other titles are: Mahler: Symphony No. 8 - Kubelik, Schubert: Symphonies Nos. 3 & 8 - Kubelik & Schubert: Mass No. 6 - Kubelik), the listener can compare the original tapes (having been repaired and re-spliced if needed) to a version (which is presented first on the SACD and is the version on the RBCD layer) which the engineers have gone to work so that "tape noise and disturbing noises are reduced to a minimum, pre-echoes and echoes removed, rests revised and the recording sound improved as much as possible". The two versions are presented back-to-back on the stereo SACD layer, eliminating a need to change layers to hear the difference.

Before examining the differences in sound quality, the performance. Kubelik has chosen the 1877/78 version of Bruckner's score and this shortened version (compared to the 1873 original score) is presented with admirable humanity. Throughout the tempi are well chosen and the pulse is kept steady in a manner similar to Karajan's approach to Bruckner although without the allusions to spiritual grandeur that Karajan often sought. The performance taken from a single performance shows just how good the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra were in the 1960's (this concert was held on 09/11/1962 and for a November night, the audience is admirably quiet!) Apart from a small lapse of intonation by the trumpets in the Adagio, there is nothing else of criticism that can be levelled at the orchestra nor at Kubelik. In fact, if you don't respond well to the spiritual approach, this performance is nicely straightforward without the anonymity that some people can be accused of today. Those who dislike applause need not fear as it has been excised.

The comparison between the two versions is very interesting. The "altered" version sounds slightly brighter (arguably a very little overly so) and ever-so-slightly plastic compared to the more "natural" sound of the unaltered version. However, I did not feel like this at all upon first listen and the differences are so slight as to be unnoticeable (in this case) for much of the time. Still, the 1962 is not first rank for today's standards but is very good for the period.

Recommended.