



**Paul Kletzki conducts Brahms,  
Schubert & Beethoven**

aud 95.642



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[American Record Guide](#) November 2016 (David Radcliffe - 2016.11.01)



This is a particularly interesting broadcast concert, recorded 7 September 1946 with an ad hoc orchestra which the Vienna-bound Walter Legge had just been recording. Kletzki (1900–73) had spent the war years in Switzerland and must have got on well with the ensemble, for the musicians, if a little ragged sometimes, play their hearts out. His extreme interpretations sound remarkably unlike EMI productions—except perhaps their Furtwänglers. There is something to be said for provincial performances—one thinks of all the “bad” Homeric manuscripts from out of the way places now being diligently examined for traces of an earlier Homer than what came down through Athens. Kletzki and his Swiss musicians play in a manner which might be described not only as pre-war but pre-electric, with outrageously fluctuating tempos, rubato, massive dramatic contrasts, and eccentric phrasing.

This would be all for naught if the results were not musical, but I find these highly-charged performances persuasive, particularly the Brahms symphony. Subtle they are not, but if you enjoy unfiltered, late-romantic, expressionist modernism you will find it here, captured with a thrilling dynamic range not obtainable when this mode of performance was still in vogue. One thinks of over-the-top Russian 78s—it may be that the conductor, who had been in the Soviet Union before migrating to Switzerland, was inspired by Golovanov as well as by Furtwängler (who had once played his compositions in Berlin). It must have been a great release for Paul Kletzki to be able to travel in the West after all those difficult years, but this late outburst of Nikisch-Mahler sensibility is a worthy memorial of what he left behind. The production is first-rate.

[Audio Video Club of Atlanta](#) September 2016 (Phil Muse - 2016.09.01)

source: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/ClubExpressClub...>



The hand of the master is equally evident in Brahms’ Fourth, where he shapes the contours of the music to perfection, emphasizing both the architectural strength and the expressive beauty of this work.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

Crescendo Magazine 28 avril 2017 (Pierre Jean Tribot - 2017.04.28)  
source: <http://www.crescendo-magazine.be/paul-kl...>



Paul Kletzki à Lucerne

L'orchestre montre parfois certaines fragilités (vents !), mais la tension imposée par le chef galvanise les musiciens. En conclusion, on tient un concert d'un grand intérêt au service de la mémoire d'un chef trop oublié. Le travail de remasterisation des bandes d'origine est exceptionnel en dépit des limites techniques inhérentes à l'âge de la captation.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**Fanfare** October 2016 (James Miller - 2016.10.01)

fanfare

Paul Kletzki was born in 1900 and died two weeks short of his 73rd birthday. A native of Poland, he moved to Germany in 1921 with the intention of being a composer and found some success there before departing in 1933 with the arrival of Nazism. Mussolini's turn toward anti-Semitism drove him from Italy in 1936. After a few years in the Soviet Union, he departed for his final home, Switzerland, in 1939. Claiming that Nazism had destroyed his creativity, he gave up composing in 1942 and concentrated on conducting. Between 1958 and 1970, he served, at various times, as chief conductor of the Liverpool Philharmonic, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. The performances listed above are taken from what is described as a charity concert ... more on that later.

I wonder if the concert featured the pieces in the order in which they appear on the CD; it seems to me that Beethoven and Schubert followed by Brahms would have been the likely order. These are certainly high-quality, intelligent performances with subtle tempo changes and an intelligent use of dynamics for dramatic emphasis. Interestingly, in the Passacaglia of the Brahms Fourth, he doesn't even pretend to keep a steady tempo, letting each variation "speak for itself" with considerable success. As imposing as it may be, this performance is like a major step on the way to his superior (and two-channel) studio recording for EMI. The Schubert "Unfinished" is, if anything, even better, with the same flexible tempos and dynamic contrasts helping the music to tell its story. After these two achievements, the strong performance of the Leonore No. 3 is almost anti-climactic.

Speaking of the dynamic contrasts that Kletzki uses to such good effect, they are sabotaged to some extent by an unexpected intrusion—anything below *mf* is accompanied by the annoying swish of a stylus traversing the grooves of what I take to be a transcription disc. Are the performances actually from a "charity concert"? Could be, but the audience is astonishingly healthy and polite—there's no shuffling, no coughing, and no applause whatsoever. As it happens, Kletzki made English Columbia 78s of all three works—the Beethoven and Schubert with the Philharmonia Orchestra and the Brahms with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra (!). In addition, I perceived what seemed to be a side break in the Brahms Symphony. All of these coincidences (?) may be explicable but I thought I should mention them. My speculations do not diminish my respect for the performances themselves, but they do have me wondering.

Gramophone August 2016 (Rob Cowan - 2016.08.01)

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### Kletzki in Lucerne

An interesting Paul Kletzki release from Audite reproduces a 1946 concert performance of an interpretation that may be familiar to some readers as a set of five Columbia 78s, namely Brahms Fourth Symphony played by the Swiss Festival Orchestra (or Lucerne Festival Orchestra as we commonly know it nowadays). The actual recording sessions lasted until September 7, which was also the day of an additional concert – given in aid of charity – which is what is reproduced here. Kletzki's performance is refreshingly bright-textured, with careful though never cautious handling of the first movement's many dialogic episodes, a warm-hearted Andante moderato, a bracing scherzo and a finale that although indulgently appreciative of the flute solo keeps a firm grip on the passacaglia structure. I loved it, though the transfer engineers have been a little over-zealous in their efforts to reduce surface noise. The same concert included Schubert's Unfinished, played without its first-movement repeat but very sensitively interpreted, and a dramatic account of Beethoven's Overture Leonore No 3. I've not heard many Kletzki performances that leave as strong an impression as the Brahms. There is no applause.

<http://hi-res.pw> April 28, 2018 ( - 2018.04.28)  
source: <http://hi-res.pw/hi-res-digital-download...>

Hi-Res

Despite their old age and the particular technical challenges presented by the remastering process, Kletzki's impressive dynamics have been fully preserved.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

Stereoplay 07|2016 (Attila Csampai - 2016.07.01)

stereoplay

### Brahms unter Strom

Es ist eine der spannendsten und zwingendsten Aufführungen der Vierten von Brahms, die ich je gehört habe, noch geballter und stringenter als die berühmten Referenzen von Klemperer und Toscanini. Vor allem in den beiden Ecksätzen kombiniert Kletzki strukturelle Dichte und emotionales Feuer zu gebündelten Energieschüben, die das späte Opus fast als Fanal jugendlicher Leidenschaft und so gar nicht als abgeklärtes Alterswerk erscheinen lassen.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

www.concertonet.com 05/15/2016 (Simon Corley - 2016.05.15)

ConcertoNet.com

**Chefs oubliés: Paul Kletzki et Antonio Pedrotti**

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*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

www.musicweb-international.com Wednesday August 24th (Jonathan Woolf - 2016.08.24)

source: <http://www.musicweb-international.com/cl...>



After the end of the Second World War, at a time when EMI's Walter Legge was re-establishing continental European contacts, Paul Kletzki became a valued addition to the roster of the company's artists. He directed a performance of Brahms's Fourth Symphony with the Swiss Festival Orchestra – it's better known today as the Lucerne Festival Orchestra – that was released on 78s and was something of a calling card for both orchestra, with which Legge was delighted, and, of course, conductor. The last day of that recording session, 7 September 1946, saw an additional event, namely an evening's charity concert during when Kletzki and the orchestra reprised the Brahms they had just recorded and added two other pieces to form the release now issued by Audite.

His later Czech Philharmonic LP may be more familiar than the 78 but few Kletzki admirers would want to be without the ancillary pleasures of this live performance, notwithstanding its very close approximation to the 78 set. It's a performance of architectural surety and expressive balance. Kletzki was not one for quirks or peculiarities and he invariably saw straight to the heart of things. Thus this reading is flexible but never rhythmically flabby, and whilst the string choirs don't sing out, this may be as much to do with the rather constricted sound as anything else. The horns certainly sound on fine form – albeit there is a touch of distortion, especially noticeable in the second movement – and though the Lucerne winds can be a touch pinched tonally they are well balanced and generally personable-sounding. The Andante is nobly conceived, its narrative finely detailed, the scherzo propulsive. With a powerfully but musically convincing finale all that this really needs is slightly better engineering and a more open top, the better to capture the hall ambience. Otherwise, it reveals Kletzki, yet again, as a musician lacking grandiose pretensions but possessing the firmest architectural strengths.

Much the same goes for Schubert's Unfinished Symphony which, whilst Kletzki jettisons the first movement repeat, is notably well-phrased and conceived in dramatic terms. There's swish audible throughout but principally during the second movement where it becomes quite intrusive. I suspect that attempts to limit this have also taken some of the higher frequencies with it which accounts for the somewhat cramped sound. Nevertheless, the performance itself is deeply impressive, as is the intensity that Kletzki locates in the Leonore Overture No.3. There's some chuffing here, too, and overload hints in forte outbursts.

These relatively minor distractions apart, Audite has done well to restore this concert. Documentation is first class.

[www.pizzicato.lu](http://www.pizzicato.lu) 05/06/2016 (Remy Franck - 2016.06.05)



### Spontanes Dirigat von Paul Kletzki

Der Schweizer Dirigent Paul Kletzki (1900-1973), ehemaliger Chefdirigent in Liverpool, Dallas, Bern und beim 'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande', dirigiert auf einer CD der Reihe 'Lucerne Festival Historic Performances' von Audite das 'Swiss Festival Orchestra'. Da erklingt zunächst mit schlankem Klang, kontrastreich zwischen betonter Grübelei und drängender Aufbruchsstimmung die Vierte Symphonie von Johannes Brahms und danach eine hoch dramatische, groß-symphonisch angelegte 'Unvollendete' von Franz Schubert. Ebenfalls bemerkenswert ist die sehr expressive Ouvertüre 'Leonore 3' von Ludwig van Beethoven. Die Brahms- und Schubert –Symphonien gibt es auf anderen Labels in Studioeinspielungen, die kurz vor dem hier verwendeten, spontaneren, freieren Livemitschnitt entstanden (Audite 95.642).

[Zuger Zeitung](#) 05. Januar 2017 (Fritz Schaub - 2017.01.05)

source: <http://www.zugerzeitung.ch/nachrichten/k...>

Zuger  
Zeitung

### Ein Flüchtling wurde zur Schlüsselfigur

*CD-DOKUMENT – Die erste Schallplatte eines Schweizer Orchesters für den internationalen Markt entstand am Lucerne Festival. Paul Kletzki wurde damals zu einer Schlüsselfigur des Schweizerischen Festspielorchesters*

Schuberts Unvollendete und Beethovens dritte «Leonore-Ouvertüre», dokumentieren nicht weniger eindrücklich, auf welchem hohem Niveau damals das Festspielorchester stand, auch wenn die Tonqualität deutlich historisch ist.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

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