

SCRIBENDUM™

SC018

THE CONCERT HALL RECORDINGS

LILI KRAUS

SCRIBENDUM™



## **Lili Kraus**

### **The Concert Hall Recordings**

#### **Disc One**

**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**

**Piano Concerto No.3 in C minor, Op.37 <sup>1</sup>**

1. Allegro con brio	15'30
2. Largo	09'04
3. Rondo (Allegro)	09'09

**Piano Concerto No.4 in G major, Op.58 <sup>2</sup>**

4. Allegro moderato	18'21
5. Andante con moto	04'23
6. Rondo (Vivace)	09'43

**Total** (Includes time between tracks) **66'42**

#### **Disc Two**

**Robert Schumann (1810-1856)**

**Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54 <sup>3</sup>**

1. Allegro affettuoso	15'20
2. Andantino grazioso	05'34
3. Allegro vivace	10'13

**Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826)**

4. Konzertstück in F minor, Op.79 <sup>4</sup> 16'20

**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**

**Choral Fantasy in C minor, Op.80 <sup>5</sup>**

5. Adagio	03'38
6. Finale (Allegro)	05'02
7. Allegro molto	01'54
8. Adagio, ma non troppo	02'35
9. Marcia, assai vivace	02'24
10. Allegretto, ma non troppo (quasi Andante con moto)	04'43

**Total** (Includes time between tracks) **68'06**

#### **Disc Three**

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)**

**Piano Concerto No.9 in E flat major, KW271 <sup>6</sup>**

1. Allegro	09'55
2. Andantino	10'35
3. Rondo (Presto)	10'39

Recorded in February 1959

**Piano Concerto No.26 in D major, KW537 "The crowning" <sup>7</sup>**

4. Allegro	13'31
5. Larghetto	06'22
6. Allegretto	11'24

Recorded in December 1960

**Total** (includes time between tracks) **62'36**

<sup>1</sup> Orchestre de la Société Philharmonique d'Amsterdam conducted by Gianfranco Rivoli

<sup>2</sup> Orchestre de l'Opéra de Vienne conducted by Victor Desarzens

<sup>3</sup> Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera conducted by Victor Desarzens

<sup>4</sup> Orchestre de l'Opéra de Vienne conducted by Victor Desarzens

<sup>5</sup> Chœurs et Orchestre de la Société Philharmonique d'Amsterdam conducted by Gianfranco Rivoli

<sup>6</sup> Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera conducted by Victor Desarzens

<sup>7</sup> Amsterdam Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Gianfranco Rivoli

Digital Remastering: Abbey Road Studios

Engineer: Ian Jones

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N.B.: WE TRIED OUR BEST TO CHECK THAT THE ABOVE DATES ARE CORRECT. AS MANY COLLECTORS WILL KNOW, IT IS OFTEN VERY DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, TO FIND ACCURATE INFORMATION FOR THE CONCERT HALL RECORDINGS. PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE DATES DO NOT NECESSARILY REFER TO THE ORIGINAL RECORDING DATES.

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**Lili Kraus**

Lili Kraus was born with the gift of music. A woman of charm and talent, she bewitched audiences all over the world. She played with the world's major orchestras and performed for royalty, yet she also graced the smallest of venues, bringing her gift to places where artists had not previously performed.

Kraus was born on March 4th 1903 in Budapest, Hungary. Despite the poverty of her early years, Kraus had a musical gift and at the age of seven was admitted to the Royal Academy of Music as a piano major. Kraus most notably studied with Bela Bartók, a composer with a fiery musical talent. It is testament to Kraus's character that she did not develop in the mould of the great composer but built her own reputation, influenced by others such as Schnabel.

She played at events as diverse as the Royal Command performance after the wedding banquet of the Shah of Iran, a concert at the Royal Festival Hall in London in honour of the 90th birthday of Bertrand Russell and at Canterbury Cathedral.

Her recordings date back to the 1930s and are regarded as classics to this day. She made the first recordings of Mozart's Piano and Violin Sonatas for Parlophone in 1939 but her career was put on hold whilst performing in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). She became a POW in a Japanese prison camp during World War II. These were bitter years for Kraus. The hands which had so beautifully weaved their magic upon the keys of the piano were now put to hard labour, yet once the war was over, the memories of her internment faded as her career blossomed again.

After liberation by the British, she moved to Australia. Having lost everything, these were times of survival and earning money to live. Kraus drew strength from the harshness of the previous few years and believed she "played more beautifully than anybody ever has". Her first post war performance was at the Sydney Conservatorium. At this and subsequent performances, the tingle of excitement from the audiences was palpable. Lili was back! Her European fame afforded her huge expectant audiences, filling the halls to overflowing. A true tonic for a post war society, she was in great demand, known almost as much for the stunning outfits she wore as for her performances. The picture on the cover is a signed copy from her farewell performance in Australia and her fame there is assured for ever. She mixed easily with high society, politicians and notably her favourite film stars, Katherine Hepburn and Bette Davis, to name but two.



She used her fame to benefit others as well as herself. She performed many concerts supporting humanitarian causes and her unrelenting efforts were rewarded by her family being awarded citizenship to New Zealand where they had recently moved. This was a special time for Kraus. She loved New Zealand and New Zealand loved her. Her concerts became legendary and it is here that Kraus played over 120 times, often on dilapidated but classic English pianos. She described the sound from these instruments as like "a baby crying very softly" but the torment she endured from a public that could not understand "how such a gorgeous piano could sound so terrible" merely taught her that she could play on "any instrument at all. Any. It cannot be so bad that I cannot play on it."



Kraus had changed. She had become a vegetarian, given up smoking and was very conscious of returning to full health after her time as a POW. In 1948, after returning to Europe she discovered that Europe had also changed. Audiences once again flooded in to see the world famous Lili Kraus, but the comments of some critics were not so impressive. Expectations had changed and her playing was described as losing its polish and finesse. Suddenly it seemed that it was not just her health that Kraus needed to concentrate on changing. A combination of the detention camps and playing on terrible instruments in New Zealand to a devoted public had made her playing "undisciplined, incoherent, conceited and stupid." These were the words of Kraus herself. Perhaps she had not yet recovered from the war and it was almost as though she had to start again. She worked tirelessly reconstructing her playing and performing in small European cities but it was a concert tour of South Africa that afforded her an escape route from Europe and its harsh critics.

Kraus was appointed as artist-in-residence to the piano faculty at the Stellenbosch University in Capetown, allowing her time to rebuild her playing prowess and dented pride. Much soul searching and a typically relentless performing programme achieved what she most wanted, the confidence and ability to return as a musical great in the eyes of European audiences.

Many worldwide tours followed; India, Japan, North and South America. Kraus was well travelled, well known and well loved and in 1967 she finally settled in America, working at the Texas Christian University in Dallas. Here she was instrumental in the creation of the Van Cliburn Piano competition. From her joint home with her daughter in North Carolina she founded the "Music in the mountains" summer festival. This provided a quiet rural environment and a comfortable refuge for Kraus to spend time with her family as much as continue her recordings, performances and teaching. It was here that Lili Kraus died on November 6th 1986.





Her long and distinguished career, her performances and recordings will keep her name known for many a generation. The CD within will give the listener an insight into her broad repertoire as a great interpreter, although she was particularly noted as one of the leading interpreters of Mozart.

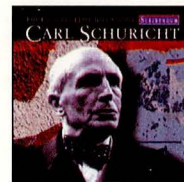
One could discuss endlessly the energy and youthfulness she brings to her performances on this CD. Graceful and elegant, full of musical spirit, it is perhaps best left to the listener to enjoy time and again.

"Lili Kraus today stands easily as one of the supreme masters of the piano. There is a divine zest in her playing and deeper still are the profound revelations, which in a way that has become intensely personal, have attained the highest level of artistry, marking every phrase she plays." – THE WASHINGTON POST

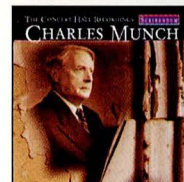
Jon Page

For a more comprehensive view of the life of Lili Kraus, we recommend the book "Lili Kraus" by Steve Roberson, edited by TCU Press, Fort Worth.

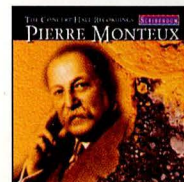
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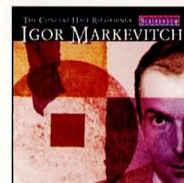
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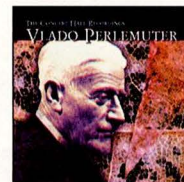
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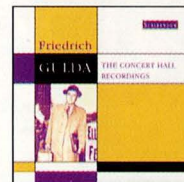
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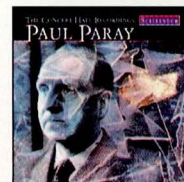
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