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**News: Classical Music**

**Piano Rolls Made by Golden Age Keyboard Legends Now Available as Audio Downloads**

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By *Vivien Schweitzer*  
21 Jun 2006

The web site kunstderfuge.com, which offers MIDI sound files for download, has added to its library audio renderings of player piano rolls made by some of the early 20th century's greatest pianists.

Piano rolls were made from recorded performances. A pianist would sit at a specially designed recording piano and the pitch and duration of notes played would be either marked or perforated on a blank roll of paper, together with the duration of the sustaining and soft pedals.

For playback on a player piano, the roll moves over a device known as the 'tracker bar', which first had 58 holes before being expanded to 65 and then 88 holes. When a perforation passes over the hole, the note sounds.

Piano rolls were first used around 1897.

MIDI files accomplish digitally and electronically what piano rolls do mechanically. In addition, software for listening to and editing a performance stored as MIDI data often has a feature to show the music (for example, in a piano roll) in score.

Among the historic piano rolls scanned into MIDI for kunstderfuge.com are Artur Rubinstein and Sergei Rachmaninoff playing various transcriptions; Jozef Hofmann playing Beethoven's *Rondo a Capriccio* and the "Moonlight" Sonata; Ignaz Paderewski playing the "Moonlight" Sonata; Vladimir Horowitz playing Chopin's Waltz in F Minor; Pietro Mascagni playing a transcripton of the Intermezzo from *Cavalleria rusticana*; and recordings by Ferruccio Busoni, Wilhelm Backhaus and Myra Hess.

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**St. Matthew Passion @ Queen Elizabeth Hall / South Bank Centre**

Iván Fischer conducts the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment in his "People's Passion," with the audience singing the chorales.

**Mahler's Second Symphony ("Resurrection") @ Berliner Philharmonie**

Pierre Boulez conducts the Berlin Staatskapelle as part of the Mahler Symphony cycle at the Berlin Festtage.

**New Recordings**

**Classical CD Highlights: March**

A young pianist records his first concertos, Schumann gets a pair of noteworthy reappraisals, and a classic Ring reaches its twilight.

**Spotlight**

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