



OTTO KLEMPERER'S LONG JOURNEY THROUGH HIS TIMES KLEMPERER: THE LAST CONCERT

**Two Films by Philo Bregstein
ArtHaus DVD 2016**

http://arthaus-musik.com/en/dvd/music/documentary/media/details/Otto_Klemperer_1.html

Legendary documentary films, these 2016 “director’s cuts” have been meticulously re-edited and digitally restored by Bregstein himself for this special DVD edition

That these films exist at all is itself a small miracle. Klemperer disliked being filmed and similarly refused to be interviewed on camera, his Face-to-Face BBC TV interview with John Freeman in November 1960 being the exception that proves the rule: when he watched the broadcast, Klemperer was horrified and asked the set to be turned off immediately.

The famous Beethoven Ninth in the Albert Hall on 8 November 1964 Klemperer had agreed to have filmed out of loyalty to the Philharmonia Orchestra, whose principal conductor he was. Now called the New Philharmonia Orchestra, and with Klemperer as its president, the orchestra celebrated its new lease on life after its disbandment in March of that year by its owner, EMI producer Walter Legge.

In 1971, in a surprising change of heart, Klemperer set aside his life-long aversion to being filmed and gave Dutch author and filmmaker Philo Bregstein full access to the rehearsals and recording sessions he was conducting in September of that year in London. From this footage Bregstein created the framework for *Otto Klemperer's Long Journey through his Times*, which then unfolds in a series of flashbacks.

"I asked him to testify about his century," Bregstein says. Throughout *Long Journey* we hear Klemperer's own voice delivering much of the narrative, joined at several junctions by that of his daughter Lotte. Authenticity is further provided by the participation of several of Klemperer's long-standing friends and close colleagues from the Weimar Republic years, foremost among them the philosopher Ernst Bloch, the composer Paul Dessau and the art historian and Kroll dramatist Hans Curjel. Composer and conductor Pierre Boulez, whom Klemperer held in high regard, speaks fascinatingly of the older man's keen interest in the developments of contemporary music. These and many others Bregstein interviewed especially for his film. That all of them were able to give him direct "eye-witness" accounts lends the film its unique historical value.

Long Journey is enriched by much, often rare, archive material from the 1930s through 50s, among them tantalizing bits of Walter Felsenstein's 1949 production of Bizet's *Carmen* at the Komische Oper in Berlin, which Klemperer conducted. A rehearsal clip with the Philharmonia Orchestra in 1960 in Vienna finds Klemperer reacting angrily when a string player ignores his carefully marked bowings, while clips from the performance of Beethoven's 9th Symphony, filmed in 1964 by the BBC in a sold-out Royal Albert Hall, shows him at the height of his powers at almost 80 years old.

Similarly, still photos collected from all around the globe eloquently illustrate Klemperer's life and career, throwing an especially fascinating light on his work at the Kroll Opera. To all this Bregstein adds a copious selection of historical film, photo and sound material that impressively succeeds in evoking the political and cultural climates reigning in Europe and America at the time.

DVD
VIDEO

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TWO FILMS BY PHILO BREGSTEIN

KLEMPERER THE LAST CONCERT



LIMITED EDITION
1725 / 1973

Incl. the complete concert recording from September 26, 1971, on 2 Vinyl LPs