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FAURÉ

CHAMBER Music, VOLUME 3

PRISTINE
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CHAMBER Music Vol. 3

PIANO QUINTET No. 2 IN C MINOR, OP. 115

RAY LEY, PIANO

THE PASCAL QUARTET

RECORDED IN 1951

disk2disc

PRISTINE
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Ray Ley, piano
The Pascal String Quartet:
Jaques Dumont, Violin I
Maurice Crut, Violin II
Leon Pascal, Viola
Robert Salles, Cello

Piano Quintet No. 2 in C minor, Op. 115

- 1 1st mvt. - Allegro Moderato (9:41)
- 2 2nd mvt. - Allegro Vivo (6:27)
- 3 3rd mvt. - Andante Moderato (9:29)
- 4 4th mvt. - Allegro Molto (4:23)

Recorded c.1951

First issued, 1951, in USA on Concert Hall Society CHS1093
First issued, 1953, in UK by Nixa Record Company Ltd on CLP 1093

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Peter Harrison
Additional XR equalisation and Ambient Stereo processing by Andrew Rose

Total duration: 30:00 ©2008 Pristine Audio.

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FAURÉ

CHAMBER MUSIC, VOLUME 3

RAY LEV, THE PASCAL QUARTET

Ray Lev (May 8, 1912 - May 20, 1968) was an American classical pianist. One year after her birth in Rostov na Donau, Russia, her father, a synagogue cantor, and mother, a concert singer, brought her to the United States.

Lev's early piano studies were with Waiter Ruel Cowles in New Haven, Connecticut and Gaston Déthier in New York. She made her debut at age 17 in England performing Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1* under Sir Landon Ronald. After winning the American Matthay Prize and the Philharmonic Symphony Scholarship, she studied with Tobias Matthay in England from 1930 to 1933. Thereafter, Lev returned to the United States, where she made her New York debut in 1934 with the National Orchestral Association.

Her annual recitals in Carnegie Hall were generally sold out; she also toured successfully in Europe, the United States, and Canada and performed on radio network broadcasts. Although Lev gave two command performances in London, England, performed for US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and earned seven citations for patriotic service by extensively performing for US and allied armed forces during World War II, in 1950 she had the dubious distinction of being the sole classical pianist named in the Red Channels list of alleged communist sympathizers during the American Red Scare. Little information about her appears thereafter, and her name is largely forgotten today.

After World War II, Lev began making phonograph records for the Concert Hall Society label, first on 78 RPM disks and then on LPs. She set down some adventurous literature for the day, including Schubert's *Piano Sonata in C Major, D. 840 (Reliquie)* with the completion by Ernst Krenek, probably otherwise represented on records in this form only by the slightly later performance of Friedrich Wührer on Vox. Her recording has not appeared on compact disc, although Wührer's has received a private CD release copied from LP. Lev's records that have achieved CD reissue include her 1946 account of Bach's *Concerto No. 5 in D minor after Vivaldi's op. 3, no. 11, BWV 596*, in her own transcription, and a waltz by Sergei Prokofiev, no. 2 from his *Music for Children, op. 65*.

Notes on the restoration: When I'm considering a recording for restoration, I usually check the contemporary reviews and ratings to see how it was judged at the time of its original release. In the case of this pancake Nixa disc, I wonder what it was they reviewed, and on what equipment? For, frankly, the LP was very rough. Yet this wasn't mentioned. Was it just so common in 1953 as to be not worth mentioning?

For example, the most obvious fault, not remarked on at the time, was a strong hum: not just 50Hz or 60Hz, but both! (Either is all too common, but both? - it's the first time I've encountered this. Not mentioned in the reviews.)

After double de-humming and heavy doses of the usual restoration medicine (end of side 1 particularly bad), the underlying recording was revealed. In all their horror were nasty shrieky strings and a piano swathed in cotton-wool and apparently in a different studio. Minor miracles were achieved jointly by Andrew Rose and self to resolve this and the result, after many, many hours of work and a final touch of Ambient Stereo, is what you'll hear here. Amazingly a very nice performance has finally been revealed, perhaps for the first time since it left the studio! - PMH

NOTES FROM WIKIPEDIA - FULL NOTES ON THIS RECORDING CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM