



Ossy Renardy

The Complete Remington Recordings



Ossy Renardy was born Oskar Reiss in Vienna on April 26, 1920. Except for some early training given by a neighbor, he was self-taught. He first played publicly at the age of eleven, and two years later toured Italy with a troupe of variety entertainers. His manager suggested that he adopt "Ossi Renardi" as a more Italian-sounding name, which the violinist later amended when he returned to Vienna. Victor de Sabata heard him perform in Milan in 1934, and invited him to play as soloist with the Vienna Philharmonic, which launched his international career.

He made his American debut at a Town Hall recital in New York in January, 1938. Two months later, a few weeks before his 18th birthday, he entered the Columbia studios to make his first recordings (reissued on Pristine PASC 383). In October of 1939, he caused a sensation at Carnegie Hall by performing all of the Paganini Caprices in the version with piano accompaniment by Ferdinand David. Early in the following year he went over to the Victor label, where he made the premiere recording of the complete set of Caprices as well as several short encores (on Biddulph LAB 061-62, nla).

America's entry into World War II saw Renardy take up American citizenship and join the Army, where he played 490 USO concerts for servicemen. After the war, he recovered from this punishing schedule by taking two years off from concertizing. Renardy signed with British Decca in 1948, where his first recording (and his only one with orchestra) was the Brahms Concerto with Munch and the Concertgebouw (Pristine PASC 013). He followed this up over the next three years with recordings of two unaccompanied Bach Sonatas and a selection of encores, most of which have been reissued on Testament SBT 1292.

In the summer of 1953, two years after his last Decca sessions, Renardy made what were to be his final recordings for Remington in New York. Remington was a budget label which specialized in artists in the twilight of their careers (Spalding, Dohnányi), so it was unusual for someone still in his prime to record for them. In the event, these final recordings show the violinist in excellent form, aided by superb engineering.

Renardy chose to remake the Paganini Caprices, still with the David piano accompaniment even three years after Ruggiero Ricci had made the first complete recording in the composer's original solo version. (The LP covers claim that Renardy was playing Paganini's own Joseph Guarnerius "Cannon", but it is now believed that he used a replica.) The performances are more assured than his earlier set, reflecting his growth as an artist. Arguably even better is the coupling of two French violin sonatas, where Renardy is partnered not with his usual accompanist, but with rising star Eugene List.

Renardy died in an automobile accident while leaving a recital in New Mexico on December 3, 1953. *Gramophone's* obituary published the following March stated, "At thirty-three he seemed destined to don the mantle of his compatriot Kreisler, whose style of playing was not dissimilar." Now, with nearly all of his commercial recordings having been reissued on CD, a fuller measure of his remarkable artistry can finally be taken.

Mark Obert-Thorn



CD ONE

PAGANINI Caprices, Op. 1

(Piano accompaniment by Ferdinand David)

- 1 No. 1 in E major (1:42)
- 2 No. 2 in B minor (2:32)
- 3 No. 3 in E minor (2:39)
- 4 No. 4 in C minor (5:13)
- 5 No. 5 in A minor (2:24)
- 6 No. 6 in G minor (3:35)
- 7 No. 7 in A minor (3:09)
- 8 No. 8 in E flat major (2:35)
- 9 No. 9 in E major (2:44)
- 10 No. 10 in G minor (2:06)
- 11 No. 11 in C major (4:06)
- 12 No. 12 in A flat major (2:40)
- 13 No. 13 in B flat major (2:49)
- 14 No. 14 in E flat major (1:11)
- 15 No. 15 in E minor (2:20)
- 16 No. 16 in G minor (1:34)
- 17 No. 17 in E flat major (3:28)
- 18 No. 18 in C major (2:02)
- 19 No. 19 in E flat major (2:25)
- 20 No. 20 in D major (3:29)
- 21 No. 21 in A major (2:32)
- 22 No. 22 in F major (2:26)
- 23 No. 23 in E flat major (3:14)
- 24 No. 24 in A minor (4:16)

Eugene Helmer *piano*

First issued on Remington R-199-146 (Nos. 1-12)
and R-199-152 (Nos. 13-24)

CD TWO

FRANCK Violin Sonata in A major

- 1 1st Mvt. - Allegretto ben moderato (5:23)
- 2 2nd Mvt. - Allegro (7:43)
- 3 3rd Mvt. - Ben moderato: Recitativo - Fantasia (6:08)
- 4 4th Mvt. - Allegretto poco mosso (5:49)

RAVEL Violin Sonata No. 2 in G major

- 5 1st Mvt. - Allegretto (7:32)
- 6 2nd Mvt. - Blues: Moderato (6:06)
- 7 3rd Mvt. - Perpetuum Mobile: Allegro (3:35)

Eugene List *piano*

First issued on Remington R-199-148

Ossy Renardy *violin*

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn
Cover artwork based on a photograph of Ossy Renardy

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New York City

Total duration: 1hr 49:22

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