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ARTURO TOSCANINI

All-Wagner Concert, 22 February 1941

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It is perhaps only heroes who can talk with heroes, and this seemed especially evident last night when Arturo Toscanini conducted the NBC Symphony Orchestra in a Wagner program which he discoursed unforgettably in Carnegie Hall, with Helen Traubel and Lauritz Melchior of the Metropolitan Opera Association as assisting soloists.

Both singers were in excellent vein, but singers and players were alike the instruments of Toscanini's will, and Toscanini had a single absorbing purpose which hypnotized all his associates — the proper articulation of the music of Richard Wagner. He read this music in an overwhelming fashion; everything was fused and unified in his imperious interpretation.

When the orchestra was heard without the singers it was sublimated song, plus the elemental power and the monumental lines of Wagner's symphonic style. Mr. Melchior sang with a wealth and brilliancy of tone that indicated his exceptional condition and spirits, the authority his experience as a Wagner singer bestowed him, and a sincerity which reflected the earnestness of the leader.

It was neither exactness of detail nor technical brilliancy which gave Miss Traubel her inspired eloquence. Her "Dich theure Halle" was a warming process, creditable enough, before the duet which she and Mr. Melchior delivered with a fine sweep over the glories and tumults of the orchestra. Notable were the sensitive proportions in this duet and later observed by Miss Traubel in the music from "Goetterdaemmerung." In this way, for once, the shattering climaxes were balanced and proportionous and the grandeur of Wagner's form fully revealed.

Concert review by **Olin Downes**, *New York Times*, 23 February 1941, *excerpts*

Producer's Note

A couple of weeks ago I was contacted by a donor who prefers to remain anonymous, and offered a set of superior transfers of the original NBC acetate discs which make up this recording. With more than one set, covering a number of the side changes, this allowed me an unprecedented choice of material, all of it in a quality and with a frequency range one simply doesn't expect from this era in recorded sound. My correspondent was familiar with the raw transfers, but eager to hear what a Pristine XR remastering might achieve with them. The result is, for the bulk of the recording, little short of miraculous - only occasionally does the source give itself away to remind you that this is a recording made over 73 years ago. The orchestral and vocal balance is excellent, the acoustic almost ideal, the performances sublime, as the *Times* reviewer described the following day. Here we present the full, unedited broadcast, including the interval talk on Wagner. I have tracked the final masters such that those who wish to skip the commentary can easily do so, whilst those who'd rather enjoy the full experience, in unprecendently high fidelity sound quality, may also find their demands fully met. **Andrew Rose**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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Toscanini

The All-Wagner Concert of 22nd February 1941

Featuring music from:
Lohengrin
Tannhäuser
Die Walküre
Tristan und Isolde
Götterdämmerung

with
Helen Traubel, soprano
Lauritz Melchior, tenor

NBC Symphony Orchestra

The full live NBC broadcast recording from Carnegie Hall, New York

Toscanini All-Wagner Concert

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XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of
Arturo Toscanini

Live broadcast recording from Carnegie Hall,
New York City, 22 February 1941
Broadcast on the NBC Blue Network, 9:35-11:00pm

Total duration: 2hr 9:43

Part 1

- 1 Introduction, announcer: Ben Grauer (2:09)
- 2 Lohengrin - Prelude to Act 1 (9:32)
- 3 Tannhäuser - Act 2, "Dich, teure halle" (5:41)
- 4 Die Walküre - Act 1, Scene 3 (27:46)
- 5 Back anno, part 1 (0:50)
- 6 Intermission talk: Samuel Chotzinoff on Wagner (9:17)

Part 2

- 1 Introduction to part 2 (6:02)
- 2 Tristan und Isolde - Prelude to Act 1 (12:24)
- 3 Götterdämmerung - Dawn Duet and Siegfried's Rhine Journey (20:38)
- 4 Götterdämmerung - Siegfried's Death and Funeral March (13:14)
- 5 Götterdämmerung - Brünnhilde's Immolation (20:21)
- 6 Back anno, part 2; programme close (1:50)

Helen Traubel soprano

Lauritz Melchior tenor

NBC Symphony Orchestra

Arturo Toscanini conductor

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