

DISC
DIGITAL AUDIO
PASC122

KOUSSEVITZKY

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONCERT OF 4TH APRIL, 1946

PRISTINE
AUDIO
XR

DISC
DIGITAL AUDIO
PASC122

KOUSSEVITZKY

CONDUCTS THE
BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
ON 6TH APRIL, 1946

PRISTINE
AUDIO
XR

1 STRAUSS, R: Don Juan, Op. 20

18:42

2 MUSSORGSKY: Prelude to Kovanshchina
(Dawn over the Moscow River)

6:37

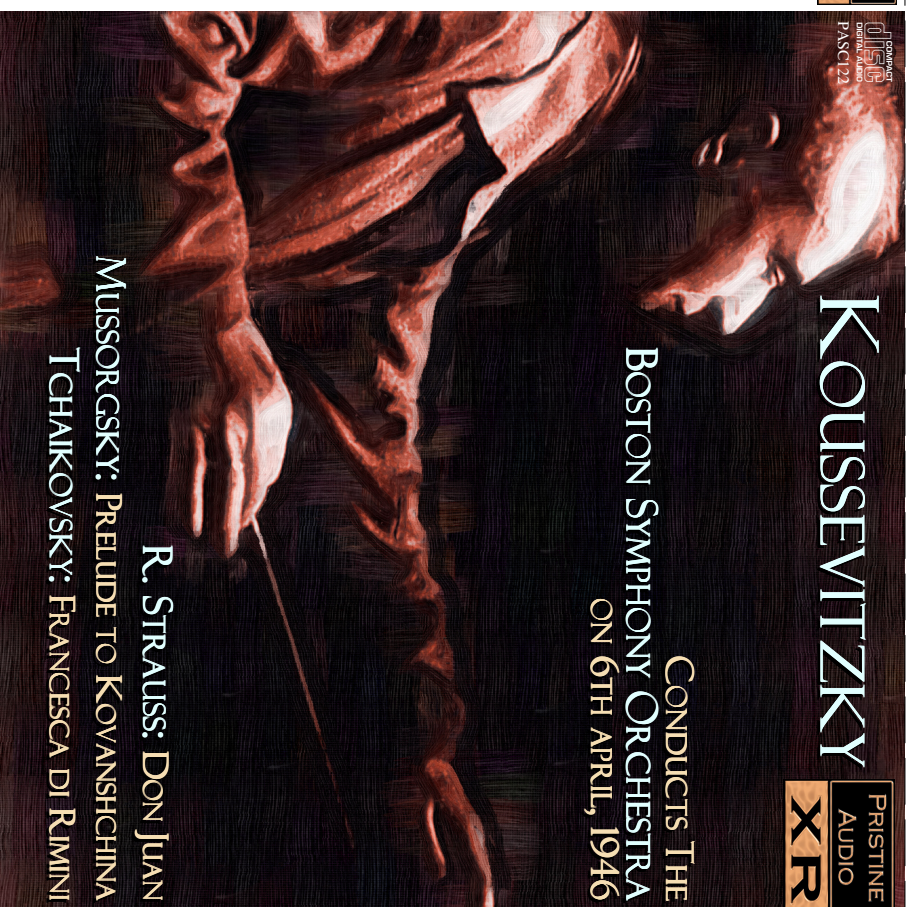
3 TCHAIKOVSKY: Francesca di Rimini, Op. 32

25:29

Live concert recording from Boston Symphony Hall, 6th April, 1946
Transfer from a later BBC re-broadcast of transcription discs.
Transfer and XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, September 2008
Cover artwork based on a photograph of Sergei Koussevitzky

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CONCERT OF 4TH APRIL, 1946: R. STRAUSS, MUSSORGSKY, TCHAIKOVSKY
KOUSSEVITZKY, BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PRISTINE
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BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONCERT OF 4TH APRIL, 1946

COMPACT
disc
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Dr. Sergei Aleksandrovich Koussevitzky (Russian: Серге́й Алекса́ндрович Кусеви́тский) (July 26, 1874 – June 4, 1951), was a Russian-born conductor, composer, and double-bassist known for his long tenure as music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1924 to 1949. (His forename is transliterated into English as either Sergei or Serge and his surname is transliterated as variously Koussevitzky, Koussevitsky, Kussevitzky or, into Polish as Kusewicky.)

Koussevitzky was born into a poor Jewish family, growing up in Vyshny Volochyok, Tver Oblast, about 250 km northwest of Moscow. His parents were professional musicians who taught him violin, cello, and piano. At the age of fourteen he received a scholarship to the Musico-Dramatic Institute in Moscow for the study of double bass and music theory. He excelled at the bass, joining the Bolshoi Theatre orchestra at the age of twenty and succeeding his teacher as the principal bassist at twenty-seven. In 1901, he made his debut as a soloist in Moscow, and won critical acclaim for his first Berlin recital in 1903. In 1902 he married his first wife, the dancer Nadezhda Galat. The same year he wrote a popular concerto for the double bass. Koussevitzky divorced his first wife and married Natalie Ushkov, the daughter of an extremely wealthy tea merchant, in 1905. At some time before this he had converted from Judaism to Christianity. The couple moved to Germany. In Berlin Sergei studied conducting under Arthur Nikisch, using his new-found wealth to pay off his teacher's gambling debts.

In 1908 Koussevitzky made his professional debut as a conductor, hiring and leading a concert with the Berlin Philharmonic. The next year he founded his own orchestra in Moscow and branched out into the publishing business, forming his own firm and buying the catalogues of many of the greatest composers of the age. Among the composers published by Koussevitzky were Alexander Scriabin, Sergei Prokofiev, Igor Stravinsky and Nikolai Medtner. During the period 1909 to 1920 he established himself as a brilliant conductor in Europe. After the Russian Revolution, he returned to his homeland for a brief time to conduct the State Symphony Orchestra of Petrograd; in 1920, he made his way to Paris, where he organized the Concerts Koussevitzky, presenting new works by Prokofiev, Stravinsky, and Maurice Ravel. In 1924 he moved to the United States, and would become a citizen in 1941.

Koussevitzky was appointed conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1924, beginning a golden era for the ensemble that would continue until 1949. Over the next twenty-five years, he continued building the ensemble's reputation as a leading American orchestra, and developing its summer concert and educational programs at Tanglewood. In the early 1940s, he discovered a young tenor named Alfredo Coccozza, who would later be known as Mario Lanza, and provided him with a scholarship to attend Tanglewood. With the Boston Symphony he made numerous recordings, most of which well-regarded by critics. His students and protégés included Leonard Bernstein, Samuel Adler, and Sarah Caldwell. Bernstein guest conducted the Boston Symphony, including the 1951 world premiere of Charles Ives' Symphony No. 2. Bernstein's very last concert, in August 1990, was with the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood.

In 1922, Koussevitzky commissioned what has come to be known as one of the greatest and most popular examples of orchestration in the repertoire, Maurice Ravel's arrangement of Modest Mussorgsky's 1874 suite for piano, *Pictures at an Exhibition*. It was premiered in Paris in 1923, and quickly became the most famous and celebrated orchestration of the work that had ever been made. Conductor Arturo Toscanini, who apparently had no great fondness for 19th century Russian music, considered the Mussorgsky-Ravel version of *Pictures* the greatest example of orchestration that had yet been produced, and performed and recorded the work for RCA Victor in 1953. Koussevitzky held the rights to this version for many years, and after his death, practically every celebrated conductor in existence recorded it.

Koussevitzky was a great champion of modern music, commissioning a number of works from prominent composers. For the Boston Symphony Orchestra's 50th anniversary he commissioned Ravel's *Piano Concerto*, George Gershwin's *Second Rhapsody*, Prokofiev's *Symphony No. 4*, which Prokofiev later revised, Paul Hindemith's *Concert Music for Strings and Brass*, and Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, as well as works by Albert Roussel and Howard Hanson.

In 1942 he founded the Koussevitzky Music Foundations whose charge is to foster and commission the performance of new work. Benjamin Britten's opera *Peter Grimes*, Douglas Moore's opera *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, Béla Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*, Aaron Copland's *Symphony No. 3*, and Olivier Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie* are all direct results of the foundations.

Following Koussevitzky's 1951 death, his widow, Olga Koussevitzky, presented double-bassist Gary Karr with his double bass, previously believed to be fabricated in 1611 by brothers Antonio and Girolamo Amati. The instrument now bears the names of both Karr and Koussevitzky.

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