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PASC 431

TOSCANINI

Bizet and Gershwin

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Toscanini admired Bizet's music, especially *Carmen*, which he led many times in the theater. His arrangement of the suite from the opera differs from Bizet's *Suite No. 1* in the sequence of the selections it draws upon and the use of the Toreador's music as heard in the final act rather than in the opera's prelude. It also includes a harp cadenza composed by the maestro.

The performances of the *Arlésienne* and *Fair Maid of Perth* Suites offer prime examples of Toscanini's ability to project a work with unaffected, straightforward simplicity. Quite possibly his attraction to the former was rooted in its original orchestration, which included the first use of a solo saxophone by a major composer and the deployment of harp, horn, and plucked strings to suggest bells. These and other details emerge in sharp focus under Toscanini's direction.

The studio recording of *An American in Paris*, made exactly two months after Toscanini's second broadcast performance of the work, has justly been cited as an example of how fine studio 8H could sound under ideal conditions ... All three of Toscanini's surviving performances of this work (probably the only ones he led) evince his musicality and responsiveness to its jazz idiom, while suggesting an elegance not always encountered in ostensibly more idiomatic performances. And as William Youngren has pointed out in his annotations for the RCA CD, Toscanini's basic tempo, while sometimes called "too fast," is identical to that favored by the composer.

Mortimer H. Frank, "Toscanini - The NBC Years" - (*Amadeus Press*, 2002)

Producer's Note

The bulk of this release was sourced from discs prepared for South American Spanish-language re-broadcasts of the 1943 all-Bizet special War Bonds concert which omitted the excerpts from *Carmen*. These have been transferred from a second, full source which was marginally less well-preserved. Meanwhile a third, lower quality source of the full concert with Ben Grauer's announcements provided the commentary and applause heard here. The sound quality of the excerpts from *La Jolie Fille de Perth* and *L'Arlésienne* was particularly high for 1943 and I've been able to do great work on this to produce a particularly wonderful, clear and full orchestral sound. The *Carmen* excerpts come close to matching this, though with less top end extension the sound isn't quite as clear. The 1945 recording of Gershwin's *An American in Paris* was suggested to me as an interesting and "kind of" appropriate extra for this release. It's an exuberant performance I'd not heard before, and despite some slight surface noise that's been largely dealt with it's been brilliantly preserved here, coming across with much more life and pizzazz than the RCA studio recording which Toscanini made a couple of months later.

Andrew Rose

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

conducts

BIZET

Orchestral highlights from
La Jolie Fille de Perth
L'Arlésienne
Carmen

War Bonds Concert, 1943

plus

GERSHWIN

An American in Paris

NBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Live broadcast recordings, 1943 & 1945



TOSCANINI *Bizet War Bonds Concert*

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of
Arturo Toscanini

- 1 Ben Grauer - Introduction (1:15)

BIZET La Jolie Fille de Perth

- 2 Prelude (4:03)
- 3 Serenade (4:44)
- 4 March (3:15)
- 5 Gypsy Dance (3:20)

BIZET L'Arlésienne

- 6 Prelude (6:26)
- 7 Minuet (2:53)
- 8 Adagietto (2:28)
- 9 Pastorale (6:38)
- 10 Carillon (4:27)

- Ben Grauer - midway announcements (0:45)

BIZET Carmen

- 12 Aragonaise (2:33)
- 13 Intermezzo (4:26)
- 14 Les Dragons d'Alcala (1:53)
- 15 Les Toréadors (4:06)

- 16 Ben Grauer - closing announcements (2:10)

- 17 GERSHWIN An American in Paris (17:12)**

NBC Symphony Orchestra *Arturo Toscanini*

BIZET War Bonds Concert
Broadcast of 19 September, 1943
NBC Studio 8H, New York

GERSHWIN An American in Paris
 Broadcast of 18 March, 1945
 NBC Studio 8H, New York

Total duration: 72:34

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