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PIERRE MONTEUX

Tanglewood Volume 1: 1958

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Berl Senofsky, who died very recently, was born in Philadelphia in 1925. Of Russian émigré stock – his father had studied with Leopold Auer – Senofsky studied with the dean of American teachers, Louis Persinger, and subsequently with Ivan Galamian at Juilliard. He came from a remarkable generation of American born players – his contemporaries included Oscar Shumsky, Sidney Harth, Aaron Rosand, David Nadien and the slightly younger Joseph Silverstein. Between 1950 and 1955 he was Assistant Concertmaster of the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell. Next to him in the leader's chair sat Joseph Gingold. Senofsky sensationally became the first American winner of the Queen Elizabeth Violin Competition in Brussels – beating, in the terminology of such things, no less than the superb Russian player Julian Sitkovetsky as well as such well-known violinists as Viktor Pikaisen and Alberto Lysy. He began to appear with leading orchestras, toured the Walton Concerto with the composer conducting during an extensive Australasian tour – a superbly deadpan colour photograph of the two men arm in arm, encumbered with pipes, is reproduced in the booklet – and a strong career beckoned. Somehow it never quite happened for Senofsky despite a few discographic triumphs. The Brahms Concerto with the Vienna Symphony under Moralt on Epic both underlined his solid position on the European continent and ironically reflected the pattern of an earlier recording of another leading American player, Albert Spalding, who had, towards the end of his career, also recorded Brahms in Vienna.

Senofsky plays the Beethoven with a very sweet tone. His playing is lyric without becoming cloying, and his vibrato is characteristically fast. His playing was never motoric and one should not expect it here; in fact it's relatively expansive. As he is very much under the microphone there are times when the orchestral lower strings and winds find their statements and counter-statements are over-subdued in the balance. There is rapturous applause after the first movement finishes though, for my tastes, earlier on he can take an elastic approach to tempo modifications. The slow movement is unusually sentimental tonally, though Senofsky's trills are tightly electric and there's plenty of lyric intensity in the playing. And the finale is quite relaxed, engaging if not ultimately necessary fully effective. It's in any case a warmly characterised reading.

Jonathan Woolf MusicWeb International, 2002 (*excerpts from two reviews*)

Producer's Note

A good number of Pierre Monteux's concerts with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood in the summers of 1958, 1959 and 1961 were broadcast in early stereo FM broadcasts and preserved on tapes that have circulated privately over the years and, occasionally, seen the light of day on commercial releases. This first volume concentrates on 1958 performances of Beethoven and more modern music by French composers Debussy, Ravel, Milhaud and the German Paul Hindemith, together providing a contrasting repertoire of music, the highlight of which will be, for many, the fine performance of Beethoven's Violin Concerto of 9th August with American violinist Berl Senofsky.

The original tapes were rather hissy and closely recorded, resulting in a lack of perspective and space. They also suffered from peak distortion and, in places, intermittent treble dropout on one channel. I've done a lot to alleviate all of these problems, as well as seeking to improve the overall tonal balance of the recordings. The sound is now much cleaner and clearer, with a real sense of space, and if some peak distortion has been impossible to entirely eliminate in the very loudest sections, these are relatively few and far between and have been significantly improved.

The stereo imagery is good for a live recording so early in the stereo era, assisted by digital phase correction technology. I elected to remove the rather lengthy introductions and links from the original radio broadcasts to allow for as much music as possible.

Andrew Rose

monteux

tanglewood volume 1: 1958

BEETHOVEN Violin Concerto

The Creatures of Prometheus - Excerpts
Leonore Overture No. 3

DEBUSSY Nocturnes

RAVEL La Valse

MILHAUD Prelude from Eumenides

HINDEMITH Nobilissima Visione



Berl Senofsky violin
Boston Symphony Orchestra
Pierre Monteux conductor

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MONTEUX AT TANGLEWOOD, VOLUME 1: 1958
MONTEUX, BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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CD 1 [1] MILHAUD Les Euménides, Op. 41 - Act 3: Prelude (7:50)

DEBUSSY Nocturnes

- [2] 1. Nuages (7:24)
- [3] 2. Fêtes (6:07)
- [4] 3. Sirènes (9:53)

[5] RAVEL La Valse (11:23)

[6] HINDEMITH Nobilissima Visione (21:10)

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of **Monteux**

Milhaud, Debussy, Ravel
Recorded 25 July, 1958

Hindemith, Beethoven
Recorded 9 August, 1958

CD 2 [1] BEETHOVEN Leonore Overture No. 3, Op. 72b (13:28)

BEETHOVEN The Creatures of Prometheus, Op. 43

- [2] Overture (5:46)
- [3] 7. Adagio - Andante quasi Allegro (7:41)

BEETHOVEN Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61

- [4] 1st mvt. - Allegro ma non troppo (24:53)
- [5] 1st mvt. - 2nd mvt. - Larghetto (9:31)
- [6] 3rd mvt. - Rondo (10:00)

Berl Senofsky, violin

Recorded at the Koussevitzky
Music Shed, Tanglewood

Total duration: 2hr 15:06

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Boston Symphony Orchestra *Pierre Monteux*

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