



Sevitzky

Indianapolis Symphony, Vol. 2



This second volume of Pristine's survey of Fabien Sevitzky's complete Indianapolis Symphony recordings couples a late Romantic Russian work with the works of several American composers of (mainly) Russian extraction. Sevitzky studied under Glazunov at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, and his set of the suite *From the Middle Ages* was the first and only complete recording of the work during the 78 rpm era. Oddly, when RCA reissued the album on LP on their Bluebird label in the 1950s, the Scherzo was omitted, even though the entire work could have easily fit on one side. It receives its first reissue here.

Sevitzky's commitment to the music of his adopted land was second to none among prominent conductors in the USA at the time, and he tried to include a composition by an American composer in each of his concerts. His Victor discography lists works by Roy Harris, Harl McDonald, Leo Sowerby, David Van Vactor and Robert L. Sanders which remain unreleased. All of his issued recordings of works by American composers are included in the present program.

Arcady Dubensky (1890 – 1966) was a Russian-born American composer, arranger and violinist, who played in the New York Symphony and New York Philharmonic from 1922 to 1953. During that time, he was a prolific composer whose works were recorded by Leopold Stokowski as well as Sevitzky. His *Fugue for 18 Violins* was played in Philadelphia during Sevitzky's tenure as leader of that city's Chamber String Simfonieta, and his *Stephen Foster* was premièred by Sevitzky in 1941. The theme is taken from "Old Folks at Home (Swanee River)", which in the finale is joined by "Oh, Susanna" and "Beautiful Dreamer". Like Dohnanyi's *Variations on a Nursery Tune*, some of the variations are done in the style of other composers (Richard Strauss, Tchaikovsky, et al.)

Otto Cesana (1899 – 1980) was a composer, conductor, jazz musician and arranger who emigrated from Italy to the United States as a child, and was later to lead a series of "easy listening" LPs in the 1950s. The unfortunate title of his tone poem has guaranteed that it will never be revived, which is a pity, given that the work itself is tuneful and exuberant. Cesana wrote that his intent in the work was to illustrate the changing moods of the African-American man, "now gay, now sad, always however migrating toward carefreeness and abandon."

George Gershwin had arranged his own suite from his opera, *Porgy and Bess*, but it was little-performed when conductor Fritz Reiner commissioned American arranger Robert Russell Bennett to produce the "symphonic picture" heard here. Reiner chose the excerpts, suggested their order and even some of the key transpositions. Although Alfred Wallenstein recorded a cut version in 1944, Sevitzky became the first conductor to record it complete, beating Reiner's Pittsburgh set by seven weeks.

Like Sevitzky's substitution of the snare drum for the tambourine in the last movement of Tchaikovsky's Manfred Symphony (on Pristine PASC 479), there is another odd-sounding replacement here, as a bassoon "sings" Porgy's part in "I got plenty o' nuttin", rather than the customary banjo. (Where was the banjoist from the Dubensky *Stephen Foster* finale?) Nonetheless, Sevitzky gives a highly idiomatic performance, as he did with the other American music presented here.

Mark Obert-Thorn

fabien sevitzky
indianapolis symphony vol. 2

glazunov
from the middle ages - suite

dubensky
fugue for 18 violins
stephen foster - theme, variations & finale

cesana
negro heaven

gershwin-bennett
porgy & bess: a symphonic picture

victor studio recordings · 1941 – 1945

Obert-Thorn

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SEVITZKY, INDIANAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

sevitzky

indianapolis vol 2

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Producer and Audio Restoration
Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of Fabien Sevitzky

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Frederick P. Fellers and Charles Niss

All works recorded in the Murat
Theatre, Indianapolis, Indiana

Total duration: 69:09

GLAZUNOV From the Middle Ages - Suite, Op. 79

- 1 Prelude (7:18)
- 2 Scherzo (4:02)
- 3 Serenade of the Troubadour (4:18)
- 4 The Crusaders (9:12)

Recorded 8 and 9 February 1945

Matrix nos.: D5-RC-800-2, 801-1, 802-1, 803-2A, 804-2, 805-2

First issued on RCA Victor 12-0328/30 in album M-1222

5 DUBENSKY Fugue for 18 Violins (4:25)

Recorded 29 January 1942, Matrix no.: CS 071362-1

First issued on Victor 11-8366 in album M-912

6 DUBENSKY Stephen Foster - Theme, Variations and Finale (12:16)

Leon Zawisza *soló violin*

Recorded 28 and 29 January 1942

Matrix nos.: CS 071351-2, 071352-1 and 071353-1

First issued on Victor 11-8365/6 in album M-912

7 CESANA Negro Heaven (7:52)

Recorded 8 January 1941. Matrix nos.: CS 05786-1A and 05787-1A

First issued on Victor 18070

8 GERSHWIN-BENNETT Porgy and Bess - A Symphonic Picture (19:46)

Recorded 8 February 1945

Matrix nos.: D5-RC-811-1A, 812-1A, 813-1, 814-1A, 815-1 and 816-1

First issued on RCA Victor 11-8789/91 in album M-999

Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra

Fabien Sevitzky, conductor

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