



Horenstein

conducts Mihalocivi, Stravinsky & Bartók



The French-Romanian composer Marcel Mihalovici (1898 – 1985) and his wife, the pianist Monique Haas, were personal friends of Horenstein's from the time of his sojourn in Paris following the Nazi rise to power. The *Sinfonia Partita* by Mihalovici, an almost forgotten voice today, is a powerful, neoclassic work for string orchestra composed in 1952 that synthesizes French and Eastern European influences. The present performance by Horenstein, its French premiere, was given shortly after the world premiere in Baden-Baden under Hans Rosbaud, and formed the opening item of a concert that also included the French premiere of Alban Berg's *Altenberg Lieder*. In both cases the resultant recordings, first released on Pristine, are world premiere publications.

If the number of his performances is any indication, Horenstein's favorite works by Stravinsky were the *Firebird Suite*, which he conducted dozens of times, followed by the *Symphony in Three Movements*, which first entered his repertoire in 1956 and which here receives a bracing, bitingly acerbic performance recorded live in 1961. According to the conductor Joel Lazar, "For those who associate Horenstein with the effortless fluency encountered in his Mahler and Bruckner slow movements, the ferocity and rhythmic drive of his performance of Stravinsky's *Symphony in Three Movements* will come as a shock. This sort of sheer energy was, however, always one of his interpretative options, quite unrelated to tempo." The performance heard here "features the linear clarity readily apparent in his 1954 Paris recording of *Symphony of Psalms*," also published on Pristine.

Horenstein first encountered Béla Bartók's music during his Weimar years, which in 1927 included a number of rehearsals for the German premiere of his *Piano Concerto no. 1* with the composer as soloist, but neither he nor Furtwängler, who conducted the German premiere, ever returned to the work, a distinct loss to its performance history. The only other works by Bartók in Horenstein's repertoire were the two violin concertos and the *Concerto for Orchestra*. Although he performed and recorded the latter work on a number of occasions, the only one that has been preserved is the performance presented here, the second half of the Paris concert that included Stravinsky's *Symphony in Three Movements* also on this disc. "In addition to energy," wrote Lazar, "Horenstein found lyricism and long line in Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*, even given the frequently changing phrase lengths and time signatures. Always fascinated and obsessed with interconnections between music of different genres and style periods, he brought elements of the edgy Expressionist sonority and the sardonic, disquieting mood of the composer's middle period masterpieces to this late work, so often played merely as an orchestral showpiece or as a display of renascent nationalism.

Misha Horenstein

horenstein



mihalovici *sinfonia partita* for string orchestra
stravinsky *symphony in three movements*
bartók *concerto for orchestra*

orchestre national de la radio-télévision française
orchestre national de france
live broadcast recordings, paris, 1953 & 1961



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HORENSTEIN CONDUCTS MIHALOVICI - STRAVINSKY - BARTOK
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horenstein

conducts

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Mihalovici

Live recording, 4 May 1953
Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris

Stravinsky, Bartók

Live recording, 19 December 1961
Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris

Recordings from the private
collection of Misha Horenstein

Total duration: 71:59

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1 MIHALOVICI Sinfonia Partita for String Orchestra*, Op. 66^{*} (9:17)
Orchestre National de la Radio-télévision Française (RFT)

STRAVINSKY Symphony in Three Movements**

- 2 1st mvt. - Overture; Allegro (10:31)
- 3 2nd mvt. - Andante; Interlude: L'istesso tempo (6:20)
- 4 3rd mvt. - Con moto (6:46)

BARTÓK Concerto for Orchestra**, Sz. 116

- 5 1st mvt. - Introduzione. Andante non troppo - Allegro vivace (10:09)
- 6 2nd mvt. - Presentando le coppie. Allegro scherzando (6:37)
- 7 3rd mvt. - Elegia. Andante non troppo (8:09)
- 8 4th mvt. - Intermezzo interrotto. Allegretto (4:13)
- 9 5th mvt. - Finale. Presto (9:57)

Orchestre National de France

* World premiere recording

** First publication in stereo

Jascha Horenstein, conductor

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