

These two works both come from early in Schoenberg's compositional career: *Verklärte Nacht*, Op. 4, was written in 1899, whilst *Pelleas und Melisande*, Op. 5, dates from 1902 (though the composer returned to it several times over the following two decades to revise the piece), and represent the late-Romantic style he pursued prior to his abandonment of standard tonality and development of his twelve-tone systems of atonal composition.

We've chosen these recordings to celebrate Schoenberg's 150th birthday not so much for their tonal musical content (though it may have contributed to their being played at the time), but rather for their incredible rarity: as far as we are aware, neither has been issued before. In the case of the Stokowski/NBC Symphony recording, it seems unlikely that anyone has heard the recording outside of the concert hall audience in 1941.

The NBC Symphony's fifth season began in October 1941, and it was all-change after the previous four seasons. Toscanini had resigned his post, the concerts were cut from ninety minutes to sixty, and moved from Saturday evenings to Tuesdays. Furthermore, they took place not in Studio 8H at Radio City, but at the Cosmopolitan Opera House, later known as the Mecca Temple or City Center. In order to pay for the hire of the hall, NBC now began charging for tickets which had previously been free. In order to give some kind of value for money, Stokowski extended his concerts beyond the broadcasts. Happily, the disc cutters kept turning for these additional performances and it is from one of these reference discs, not heard in public until now, some 83 years later, that our first recording originates.

The performance did make it into a *New York Times* review – and even if Olin Downes was sniffy both about the music and the venue, he still had high praise for the performance: "Before the 'Pelleas et Melisande' music, Mr. Stokowski, who made brief explanatory remarks to introduce each composition played, informed his audience that it had now heard the radioed part of the program, and that it might stay and listen, if it would, to the 'rehearsal' of Schoenberg's music, which there had been little time to prepare and which was very difficult. We thought the appeal superfluous, since this was one of the best performances of the evening."

Alas the opening bars to *Pelleas und Melisande* escaped the disc cutters and have been permanently lost – but a bit of careful editing in of a digitally-aged and -matched more recent recording has restored the missing section for this release.

Erich Leinsdorf's appointment as successor to Charles Munch at the helm of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1962 produced an enthusiastic welcome from the *Boston Globe*, which predicted a "new golden age" for the orchestra, adding that "evidence has accumulated this Autumn to suggest that Erich Leinsdorf is probably the most profound musical scholar since Karl Muck among the Orchestra's conductors." There was high praise for the Schoenberg played that night, where "the remarkable alteration" in the orchestra's strings had produced excellent results: "Schoenberg's counterpoint was as clear as glass."

Happily this recording, made in stereo and, again, previously unissued, was intact from start to finish. The programme also included Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 and a Boston première of Alvin Etler's 1960 *Concerto for Wind Quintet and Orchestra*, a piece described in the *Globe's* review as having "the sonorities of a hive of mutant giant bees".

Andrew Rose



schoenberg
unheard recordings

Pristine
XR
PASC 724

pelleas und melisande
nbc symphony orchestra
conducted by leopold stokowski
unbroadcast live recording, 1941

verklärte nacht
boston symphony orchestra
conducted by erich leinsdorf
stereo concert recording, 1962

schoenberg

unheard recordings

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SCHÖNBERG PELLEAS UND MELISANDE - VERKLÄRTE NACHT
STOKOWSKI, NBC SO - LEINSDORF, BOSTON SO

PASC 724

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SCHÖNBERG Pelleas und Melisande, Op. 5

1. I. Die Achtel ein wenig bewegt - zögernd (3:47)
2. II. Heftig (2:32)
3. III. Lebhaft (3:42)
4. IV. Sehr rasch (6:11)
5. V. Ein wenig bewegt (1:02)
6. VI. Langsam (2:19)
7. VII. Ein wenig bewegter (4:11)
8. VIII. Sehr langsam (2:57)
9. IX. Etwas bewegt (1:49)
10. X. In gehender Bewegung (2:04)
11. XI. Breit (4:33)

NBC Symphony Orchestra
conducted by Leopold Stokowski

SCHÖNBERG Verklärte Nacht, Op. 4

12. Grave (7:18)
13. Molto rallentando (6:24)
14. Pesante (2:20)
15. Adagio (10:34)
16. Adagio (5:07)

Boston Symphony Orchestra
conducted by Erich Leinsdorf

XR remastering by: Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on
a photograph of Schoenberg

Pelleas und Melisande
Live recording, 4 November 1941
Cosmopolitan Opera House, New York
Presented in Ambient Stereo

Verklärte Nacht
Live recording, 24 November 1962
Symphony Hall, Boston
Presented in stereo

Total duration: 66:50

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