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PRISTINE SOVIET SERIES

Tchaikovsky: Eugene Onegin

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XR

I got great pleasure from this Bolshoi *Onegin* (helped by visual memories of it) and I think it, by and large, superior in sound and performance to the Decca set from Belgrade (which I also liked, with reservations). It is a lovely opera and one which goes very well on the gramophone. There is depth and perspective in the recording (for instance the chorus of distant reapers drawing towards Mme Larina's garden at dusk). The conducting of the orchestra, which is full-blooded, but a little lacking in individuality in the all-important woodwind sections (almost secondary characters in this score) is firm and brisk and the ensemble of the chorus and the dancing is efficient. Too brisk? I think I have heard the letter scene more affectionately handled; there is the regulation *ritardando* ("Are you an angel sent from heaven?"), but elsewhere there is a suggestion which may not bother you that this music is simply too familiar to the players to earn the ultimate in expressiveness. The Tatiana is no Melba; every note in her scale has a different quality! But the total effect of her singing is to me pleasing; it is a rich, fresh, young sounding voice and she seems to "live the part" convincingly. The next requirement is a good Onegin and in the baritone Belov we have a character actor whose timbre is strongly individual. He sings with meaning and with a regard for the beauty of the music as such, which is pleasing. At the end of Onegin's priggish advice to Tatiana, telling her he couldn't do more than love her "as a brother", Belov sustains the high alternative note with a finely veiled *piano* (as I believe Baklanoff used to and which one of the best current Onegins, Ernest Blanc, does). Lemeshev is, of course, a star tenor and sings as he pleases. His sweetness and perhaps rather intrusive pianos and holds are respected by the conductor: personally I thought this a very attractive and individual Lensky, but you may find it mannered (yet isn't that in character, really?). Lemeshev's leading of the post-quarrel quintet (Larina's ball) and his farewell to lost happiness (pre-duel scene) are most appealing...

All in all my verdict is that this *Onegin* can provide a lot of pleasure and that we must be grateful for an authentic Bolshoi version as well sung and recorded as this, even if you personally may have heard more delicate and affectionate accounts of the score.

Review by P. H.-W., *The Gramophone*, July 1959 - excerpts, *Parlophone UK issue*

Producer's Note

This is the first in a planned series of Soviet operatic recordings transferred and remastered from Melodya LP pressings, and as such is a new experience for me. I know the Red Army was able to acquire a good number of German taped recordings at the end of the war, and with them one assumes the technology to play them, but beyond this my knowledge of Soviet recording technology is very slender. This recording, made in 1955 in the Bolshoi Theatre, is a fine example of what they could do, and stands equal to any Western contemporary in its technical quality. That said, it remains resolutely of its era, and XR remastering has worked wonders with the tonal quality of the recording. I've also gently relieved a rather dry acoustic that did the soloists few favours. A.R.

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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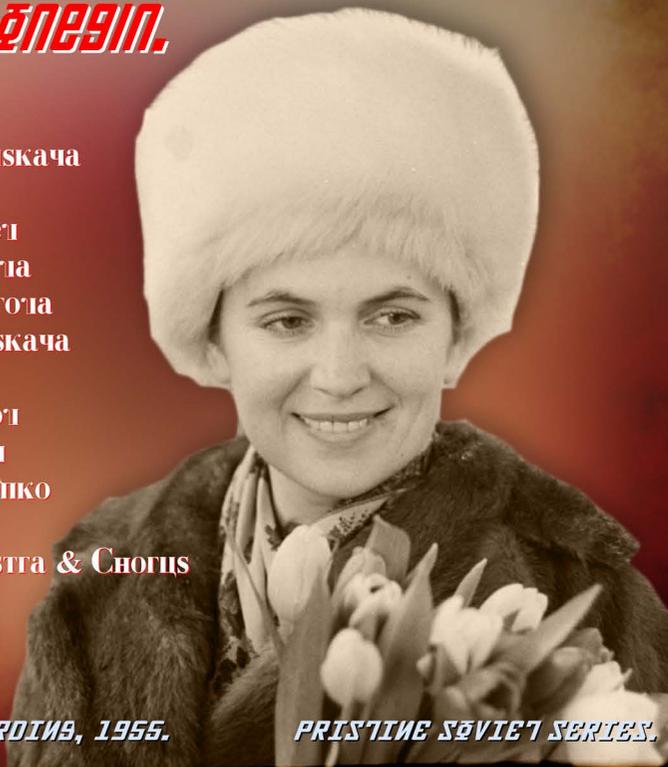
ТЧАЙКОВСКИЙ, ЕВГЕНЕ ОНЕГИН.

Евгене Белов
Чалма Тимшенскача
Флан Ретгол
Sergei Lemeshev
Лариса Дидечета
Талентина Ретгола
Евгена Тербитскача
Георги Рапкол
Фрог Шкванол
Дидгеи Соколот
Иколат Тимшенко

BOLSHOI ORCHESTRA & CHORUS
BORIS KNIAKIN

STUDIO RECORDING, 1955.

PRISTINE SOVIET SERIES.



TCHAIKOVSKY *Eugene Onegin*

- 1 Act 1 - Introduction (2:06)
- 2 Act 1 Scene 1 - Slikhali I vi za roschei glas nochnoi (5:02)
- 3 Bolyat moyi skori nozhenki so pokhodushki (4:46)
- 4 Kak ya lyublyu pod zvuki pesen etikh (3:24)
- 5 Nu ti, moya vostrushka (2:57)
- 6 Mesdames! Ya na sebya vzyal smyelost (1:51)
- 7 Skazhi, kotoraya Tatyana (1:35)
- 8 Kak shchastliv, kak shchastliv ya! (5:42)
- 9 A, vot i vi! (2:46)
- 10 Scene 2 - Nu, zaboltalas ya! (8:02)
- 11 Letter Scene: Puskai pogilabnu ya, no pryehzde (13:00)
- 12 Akh, noch minula (6:11)
- 13 Scene 3 - Dyevitsi, krasavitsi (3:05)
- 14 Zdyes on, zdyes on, Yevgeni! (4:13)
- 15 Kogda bi zhizn domashnim krugom (4:16)
- 16 Act 2 Scene 1 - Entr'acte and Waltz with Chorus (7:41)
- 17 Uzhel ya zasluzhil ot nasmyeshku etu? (3:18)
- 18 A cette fête conviés (3:04)
- 19 Messieurs, mesdames, mesta zanyat izvolte (4:39)
- 20 V vashem dome! V vashem dome! (5:08)
- 21 Scene 2 - Nu, shto zhe? (3:21)
- 22 Kuda, kuda, kuda vi udalilis (6:20)
- 23 Duel scene: A, vot oni! (5:48)
- 24 Act 3 Scene 1 - Polonaise (4:27)
- 25 I zdyes mnye skuchno! (2:00)
- 26 Ecossaise 1 (1:52)
- 27 Knyaginya Gremina! Smotrite! (2:24)
- 28 Lyubvi vsye vozrasti pokorni (5:48)
- 29 Itak, poidyom, tebya predstavlyu ya (3:55)
- 30 Act 3 Scene 2 - Closing Scene: O! Kak mnye tyazhelo! (3:41)
- 31 Onegin! Ya togda molozhe (9:37)

Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra and Chorus
Chorus Master *Mikhail Shorin*

Conductor *Boris Khaikin*

CAST

Eugene Belov *Eugene Onegin*

Galina Vishnevskaya *Tatiana*

Ivan Petrov *Prince Gremin*

Sergei Lemeshev *Lensky*

Larissa Avdeyeva *Olga*

Valentina Petrova *Larina*

Eugena Verbitskaya *Philipyevna*

Georgi Pankov *Captain*

Igor Mikhailov *Zaretsky*

Andrei Sokolov *Triquet*

Nikolai Timchenko *Precentor*



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XR remastering by
Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of **Galina
Vishnevskaya**

TCHAIKOVSKY
Eugene Onegin
Recorded in 1955
Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow

Transfers from Melodiya LPs
D 011287 - 011292

Total duration:
2hr 21:58

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